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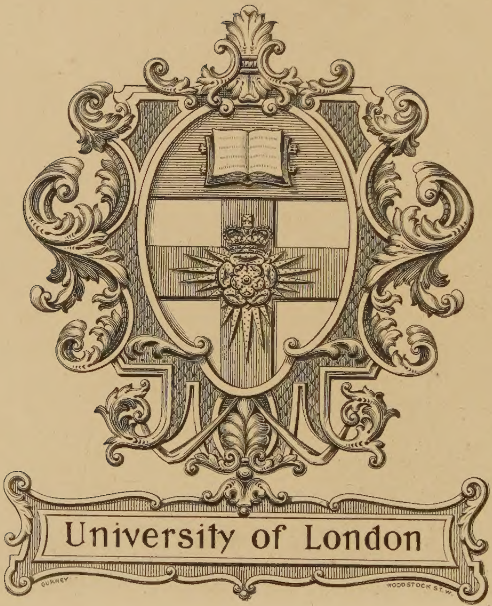

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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

53 & 54 VICTORIÆ, 1890.

VOL. CCCXLIII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MARCH, 1890,

TO

THE FIRST DAY OF MAY, 1890.

Third Volume of the Session.

THE HANSARD PUBLISHING UNION, LIMITED,
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Chronology of Hansard's Debates.

The PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of th country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources when these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal: Debat of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of tl Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; Tl Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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ERRATA.

April 18. Sir Lyon Playfair, on page 887, line 17, *alter* man *to* nation.

April 24. Lord Elphinstone, on page 1248, line 28, *alter* 16,000 *to* 1,600.

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HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

IN THE

FIFTH SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 5 AUGUST, 1886, IN THE FIFTIETH
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1890.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 27th March, 1890.

LUNACY CONSOLIDATION BILL.
(No. 24.)

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Orders Nos. XXI., XXXIX., and XLV., considered (according to order), and dispensed with for this day's sitting.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.
ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 48.)

Moved,

"That the Bills have precedence of the Orders of the Day which stand before them."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury*).

Motion agreed to; then Bills read 2^{a} (according to order); and, Standing Orders Nos. XXXIX. and XLV. having been dispensed with, Committees negatived: Bills read 3^{a}, and passed.

OPEN SPACES BILL.—(No. 41.)
SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*THE EARL OF MEATH: My Lords, in asking you to read the Open Spaces Bill a second time, I desire, very briefly, to explain its objects. The principal object is to improve existing legislation on the subject; also to afford greater facilities for the acquisition and maintenance, by Local Authorities, of open spaces, and the extension to Local Authorities generally, of powers which at present are vested only in certain Authorities, and also to afford greater protection against the illegal enclosure of Metropolitan commons with the view of their being regulated as open spaces. It is only very recently, comparatively speaking, that the public have appreciated the necessity of acquiring open spaces in our large towns. It is not to be wondered at if occasionally it is necessary to revise these Statutes; for it would be very extraordinary if, in such a short space of time as 13 years, we had found out the way at once of bringing forward complete and final legislation on the subject. It is only by experience that we can know whether the present Acts are really available and of full force in regard to the preservation of these open spaces. The existing legislation is as follows :—In 1877 an Act was passed for affording facilities for the enjoyment by the public of open spaces in the Metropolis; and in 1881 an Act was passed to amend that. In 1884 a Bill was brought into Parliament and passed. That Bill dealt exclusively with disused burial grounds, and was for the purpose of preventing the erection of buildings upon them. The last Bill which passed through Parliament was in 1887. This was an Act for the purpose of extending certain provisions of the former Acts and amendments to Sanitary District Authorities throughout England, Wales, and Ireland. The past legislation has proved of the very greatest benefit to Local Authorities and to others who have desired to increase facilities for recreation in our large towns; but it has been found that there are certain defects or omissions in those Acts, and it is the object of this Bill to remove those defects and omissions. Sections 1 and 2 of the Bill are simply formal sections for the simplification of title and the definition of words. Section 3 empowers Trustees to convey open spaces to Local Authorities in cases where there is nothing to prevent them now save the general equitable rule which does not allow Trustees to delegate their office. The former Acts which I have mentioned emancipated Trustees in the far stronger cases of Trusts held under Acts of Parliament; and I do not think your Lordships will object to extend that jurisdiction to those who do not now possess it. The particular case which I have in my mind at this moment with regard to this clause is a Park in Ireland, Victoria Hill Park, Killiney, near Dublin, which was laid out at the time of the Queen's Jubilee, and which has been vested in Trustees; but those Trustees are unable to hand it over to the Local Authority, although I believe the Local Authority in this case is not at all unwilling to maintain it. Sections 4 and 5 of the Bill meet the case of hospital gardens and other grounds which are held for the purpose of charities and which do not come within Sections 2 and 3 of the Act of 1881 because surrounding householders have no right of access to them. Under this section the Trustees will have the power of handing over such gardens and grounds to the Local Authority, if at meetings duly held a majority of two-thirds pass such a resolution. Sections 2 and 3 of the Act of 1881 are permissive, and this is a clause which I believe will meet with your Lordships' approval. Then Clause 6 extends the operation of Section 12 of the Open Spaces Act, 1887, to any Local Authority. At present a Vestry or District Board has no power of purchasing land for open spaces, unless the land comes within the definition of an open space as defined by the Acts of 1881 and 1887; that is, that the open space is entirely unbuilt upon. In the case of the Pottery Lane Recreation Ground, in the neighbourhood of Notting Hill, the Local Authorities were desirous of acquiring that space, which was practically open, because the houses there had been pulled down; but they were unable to do so, owing to the fact that there were one or two sheds, and I am not quite sure whether there might not have been an old tumble-down house or two on the land. However, as there were bricks and mortar standing on the land, they were unable to acquire it. They would have been unable to obtain possession of it had it not been that a voluntary Association stepped in and enabled the purchase to be made, the land being handed over to the Vestry, who were to recoup the money which they had laid out. But that was a risk which it is hardly fair to expect a voluntary Association to run; for if the Vestry had refused afterwards to hand over the money, this voluntary Association would have found itself hampered with this land which it had bought at a very high price as compared with the funds in its possession. Under Section 7 it is hoped that in future it will be almost impossible for Metropolitan commons to be enclosed, because, under it, no Metropolitan common can be enclosed without a special Act of Parliament. A Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1865 for the purpose of considering the whole question of the enclosure of commons, and that Committee recommended that no enclosure should take place within the Metropolitan area. The result of that Committee was that in 1866 an Act was passed which took away from the Enclosure Commissioners the power of enclosing commons within the Metropolitan area; but it did not interfere with the right of the Lord of the Manor under the Statute of Merton, as old in date as A.D. 1235, to enclose the commons if he had carried out certain conditions mentioned therein. With regard to that right, the Select Committee of 1865 recommended that the Statute should be repealed, as having fulfilled its purpose and been superseded by modern legislation, being specially ill adapted to open spaces near the Metropolis. That it is no unnecessary clause which is suggested will be apparent when I remind your Lordships of what I have no doubt you are well aware, that in the cases of Epping Forest, and Berkhamsted, Plumstead, Tooting, and Banstead Commons a fight had to be sustained with the Lords of all those Manors; and unless funds had been forthcoming those commons would not have been saved for the benefit of the public at large. If Epping Forest had been lost to the public, I think your Lordships will agree it would have been almost a national calamity; yet if money had not been forthcoming, and in very large sums, owing entirely, I may say, to the munificence of the Corporation of London, it would not have been possible to acquire that magnificent open space, over 5,500 acres in extent, which, I am proud to say, is the largest municipal park in the world. It is, my Lords, to obviate this waste of means, and to prevent the injustice which may be done when funds are not forthcoming to fight the battle, that this section has been drawn up. As regards Section 8, that enables Metropolitan Local Authorities to purchase land, wholly or in part, outside their area. The Local Authorities outside London have already the power by the Public Health Act. Section 12 of the Open Spaces Act, 1887, was evidently copied from the Public Health Act; but the draftsman omitted another clause in the Public Health Act, giving power to buy land in or out of the district. The effect of that omission is this: at this moment there is a certain piece of ground, called North Woolwich Gardens, which is going to be taken over by the London County Council, and the London County Council has to obtain an Act of Parliament in order to acquire power to maintain these grounds; whereas the East Ham Local Authority could have taken over North Woolwich Gardens, which are partly situate within that district, even had they been entirely within the Metropolitan area; but the London County Council cannot take over those Gardens, because a portion of them is in East Ham. It is for the purpose of getting rid of such anomalies, and for improving legislation with regard to open spaces, not with the view of bringing forward new legislation, but simply to emphasise and carry out in its entirety the spirit of legislation which dictated the Acts of 1877, 1881, and 1887, that I ask your Lordships to read this Bill a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be not read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Meath.*)

*Lord de RAMSEY: My Lords, the Bill to which the noble Earl asks you to give a Second Reading is largely due to his well-known philanthropy, and to his desire to do all the public good he can. The object of the Bill is evidently to extend the scope of those Acts which he has already mentioned. Although I do not know that there is any serious objection to be taken to it as a whole, some of the clauses will, I think, require careful attention, because they trench a good deal upon matters which are under the cognisance of the Charity Commissioners and Board of Agriculture. With regard to what the noble Earl said as to Clause 3, I should be very glad if he could explain a little more clearly—because it will be very important in the view of the Home Office—to what lands he refers. Is no consent to be required, as is necessary by the Act of 1881, and is the conveyance of those lands to be only by gift; or if by sale, what is to become of the purchase-money? Another point which would require further elucidation is Clause 7. This relates, as the noble Lord has already stated, to the power of the Lord of the Manor under the Statute of Merton. As he truly says, that power of Lords of Manors under the Statute of Merton it was suggested by the Select Committee should be abolished; but that suggestion has not yet been adopted by Parliament; and it is now proposed, as I read it, that approval should be required; that is to say, the consent of those two Bodies, the Charity Commissioners and the Board of Agriculture. This clause would deprive Lords of Manors of those powers under the Statute of Merton, of which Parliament has already refused to deprive them, and would compel them in these matters either to deal with the Enclosure Commissioners or to obtain a private Act of Parliament. I do not think that would quite meet the noble Earl's wish, and it would want carefully looking into. That clause is, in my opinion, objectionable, and certainly the Home Office would object strongly to that as well as to Clause 7. As regards the Second Reading of the Bill, I know not what view your Lordships may choose to take of it; but if you think it right to pass the Second Reading, I hope, on behalf of the Home Office, the Bill may be referred to one of the Standing Committees.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: I do not wish to ask the House to refer the Bill to the Standing Committee for General Purposes simply because I happen to be appointed Chairman of that Committee. On that account, perhaps, my interest would be that as few Bills as possible should be referred to it; but it strikes me that this is not a Bill for the Standing Committee on Law, and therefore I would suggest that it should be referred to the Committee for General Purposes.

The LORD PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Viscount Cranbrook): With regard to referring the Bill to one of the Standing Committees, I would only remind your Lordships that we have heard something stated about the Statute of Merton and interference with manorial rights, both of which seem to me to make this a Bill having reference specially to legal matters.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: There is something in that certainly, but it is only dealt with, I think, by one single clause. However, that is a point, and I quite agree with the noble Lord that that is a matter which should be inquired into.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): I think it is undoubtedly better that the Bill should be referred to the Standing Committee on Law, because that will unquestionably be a matter of the greatest conflict, and therefore I think we had better have the opinion of the legal luminaries of the House upon it.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE BILL.—(No. 47.)

House in Committee (on Third Recommitment) (according to order); Bill reported without further Amendment; and to be read 3ª To-morrow.

IRELAND — SPECIAL COMMISSION ACT, 1888.

Earl GRANVILLE: My Lords, I beg to move the Motion of which I have given notice, with one variation with regard to the names. I omit that of Lord Greville, because I find he has not yet taken the oath—it is not because there is any difference of opinion—and there will be added the name of Lord Coleridge.

Moved,

"That the following Lords be at liberty to sign, before the rising of the House for the Easter Recess, the Protest entered against the Resolution of the House of Friday 21st March, although their Lordships were not present when the question was put:—

M. Breadalbane.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Ashburnham.
V. Hampden.
L. Camoys.
L. Wentworth.
L. Vernon.
L. Thurlow.
L. Leigh.
L. Acton.
L. Aberdare.
L. Coleridge.
L. Hothfield.
L. Northbourne.
L. Hobhouse.
L. Burton.
L. Hamilton of Dalzell.
L. Thring.

—(*The Earl Granville*).

Viscount CRANBROOK: My Lords, I am not going to take exception to the registering of the "Noes" proposed by the noble Earl without the "Ayes," and by way of what really ought to be an addition, although I am afraid it may give a somewhat false impression in regard to those noble Lords who were ready to vote in their places in the House; but I would beg to call his attention to a Standing Order which is totally contrary to his Motion, and the suspension of which he ought therefore to have put in the forefront. As I have said, I do not object to his Motion; but for the sake of regularity in the proceedings of the House, I must call his attention to the 35th Standing Order, which is this—

> "Such Lords as shall make protestation or enter their dissents to any votes of this House as they have a right to do without asking leave of the House, either with or without their reasons, shall cause their protestation or dissents to be entered into the Clerk's Book the next sitting-day of this House, before the hour of two o'clock, otherwise the same shall not be entered, and shall sign the same before the rising of the House the same day."

That is an explicit direction under the Standing Orders of the House, and it would, of course, require suspension before the noble Earl could make the Motion which stands in his name.

EARL GRANVILLE: I shall be happy to adopt the course suggested by the noble Viscount, and I beg to move that the Standing Order be now suspended.

*EARL FORTESCUE: I would only say that some years ago, when your Lordships agreed to forego your undoubted right and privilege of giving your votes by proxy, it was thought better and more seemly that votes should only be given when noble Lords had at least heard the Question put. It would be more, desirable, of course, that they should hear the debates. But, really, if noble Lords cannot, or will not, take the trouble—I am not saying that in some cases it may not have been inevitable—of attending here to hear the Question put, it seems to me that this privilege of recording protests in a permanent form on the Journals of this House being exceptional it is only decent that that power which is not enjoyed by the other House of Parliament should at least be confined to those who have heard the Question put and have either recorded their votes or have been present to say "Not-content." I have had now a Parliamentary experience in both Houses of very nearly half a century—not so long as my noble Relative—but it seems rather a strange thing to me in these days to propose this very exceptional way of exercising this very exceptional but ancient privilege of this House.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I entirely agree with the noble Earl that this is an exceptional matter; but he must have been exceedingly regardless of the business of this House if he has not constantly heard such Motions brought forward. I do not know why he should seek to deprive of the right given by the Standing Order noble Lords who were not present in the House when the Question was actually put; but, at all events, whether he is right or I am right, it is clearly a case in which if he makes that objection he ought to give notice to alter the Standing Orders.

EARL CADOGAN: Perhaps the noble Earl will allow me to point out to him that he is still irregular in moving at once the suspension of a Standing Order, under Standing Order 60, without notice. That Standing Order states that—

> "No Motion shall be granted for making any new Standing Order or for dispensing with a Standing Order of this House unless notice shall have been given in the Minutes to consider of the said Motion."

Therefore, I am afraid the noble Earl is hardly in a position to move now.

EARL GRANVILLE: I thought, as we are so near the Recess, your Lordships would not have insisted upon my giving notice, but if it be insisted upon I shall be very glad to do so.

THE EARL OF FEVERSHAM: I think the Motion of the noble Earl opposite is rather inconsistent with the practice which has been stated with regard to proxies. We have altered the rule for voting by proxy, and, therefore, considering that some of the noble Lords named were altogether absent from the debate, and others did not think it worth while to remain to the end, I cannot see, I must say, what importance the noble Earl can attach to a Protest signed under those circumstances. I cannot think that it will add either to the dignity or the reputation of this House to allow it.

*LORD SANDHURST: On behalf of the noble Earl I beg to give notice that he will move to suspend the Standing Order to-morrow to allow him to make the Motion which stood in his name to-day with the addition of the name of Lord Coleridge.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

House adjourned at Five o'clock, till to-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 27th March, 1890.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

To Mr. Vernon, for a fortnight, on account of ill-health.—(*Mr. Anstruther.*)

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT).

Address for—

"Copies of or Extracts from Correspondence relating to the system of grading Royal Engineers with Civil Engineers on their first appointment to the Public Works Department."—(*Sir Roper Lethbridge.*)

ECCLESIASTICAL DILAPIDATIONS ACT, 1871.

Return ordered—

"For the years 1885-9, inclusive, of the number of Benefices surveyed on vacancy and request in each year, and of the number of Benefices with buildings in year 1888"—

Diocese.	Number of Benefices with buildings in year 1888.	Number of Surveys.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.
		On vacancy					
		On request					

—(*Mr. Harry Davenport.*)

QUESTIONS.

POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTES.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, in the Report on Polytechnic Institutes, which he proposes to present to Members of Parliament, he will include the recently started Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, United States of America?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART-DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The Commissioners have not been able to inquire personally into the Pratt Institute, but its papers have been laid before them. It does not seem desirable to lay such papers on the Table, as it is quite a new Institution, admittedly based on the model of the Regent Street Polytechnic, and has not been long enough at work to afford any reliable guide.

SUGAR DUTIES.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware if it is a fact that the duty imposed on sugar imported from the West Indian Colonies to the United States is from £8 to £9 per ton; and whether any communications have passed between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States as to reduction of tariff; and, if not, whether Her Majesty's Government will consider as to the advisability of making some representations, so as, if possible, to obtain a reduction of the existing duty?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I am informed that practically all the sugar imported into the United States of America from the West Indies pays, not £8 or £9, but £6 10s. a ton. No communications between Her Majesty's and the United States Governments with respect to the reduction of the tariff have passed, and it is not at all likely that any good result would ensue from representations made to the United States Government, who fix their rates of Customs Duty according to the fiscal system adopted by Congress.

RAILWAY ACCIDENT TO THE BELFAST-DUBLIN MAIL TRAIN.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has learned that, on the night of Saturday, the 15th instant, in consequence of the breaking of the crank of the driving wheel of the engine of the limited mail from Belfast to Dublin the train was transferred to and proceeded upon the down line, and that a collision with a passenger train from Dublin was narrowly escaped, the engines having been brought to a standstill only when they were within 20 yards of each other; if he will inquire whether this danger to life could have been obviated by the use of the "block system"; and what action the Board propose to take in reference to the case?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I have caused inquiries to be made in consequence of the question of the hon. Member. The facts appear to be as stated, except that the drivers of the two approaching trains, having been warned to keep a look-out, brought their respective trains to a stand-still when 50 yards from each other. The directors attribute the occurrence to a grave error in single line working on the part of one of their officers, and are not of opinion that the block system would have prevented the occurrence. In deciding upon the Order to be issued to the company under the Regulation of Railways Act, 1889, the Board of Trade will bear in mind the facts of the present case.

DARTMOOR.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works when the new inch sheets of the Ordnance Survey map of Dartmoor will be published; and when the revised geological map of that district will appear?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, University of Dublin): The Director of the Survey informs me that no exact date can at present be named for the publication of the new inch sheets of the Ordnance Survey map of Dartmoor, but they will, he expects, be available within two years. The arrangements in connection with the Geological Survey of the United Kingdom are not under the control of my Department, but of that of the Lord President of the Council.

STARVATION IN CEYLON.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, having regard to his reply in the House of Commons on the 31st of July last, relative to the evictions and consequent deaths from starvation in Ceylon, the Governor has completed his "searching inquiry" which he was making into the circumstances and results of such evictions; whether the complete Return of the number of Evictions and Deaths from Starvation in each year from 1869 to 1889 will be added to the Returns of Vital Statistics published in the *Ceylon Gazette* as heretofore; whether the lists of Newara Eliya district land sales for Paddy Tax, referred to in Mr. Moir's Report, dated 25th September, 1889, have been received by the Colonial Office; and whether those lists show that land sales affecting 10,283 men, women, and children have taken place, and that, as stated by Mr. Le Mesurier, Assistant Government Agent, 981 have died of consequent want, destitution, and disease, and 2,539 persons left destitute in the villages?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The results of the searching inquiry were contained in the full and exhaustive Report by Mr. Moir, which was received at the Colonial Office on the 11th November, and which the hon. Member has no doubt seen. A copy of the question put by the hon. Baronet the Member for Hythe on the 31st of July, and of my reply, was sent to the Governor, and he was asked to furnish the Return asked for, if it could be made out with any approximation to accuracy. The Return has not been received, and our latest vital statistics are those published in the Colonial Gazettes for 1888 and the first quarter of 1889. The Registrar General has, however, supplied information for the two Divisions of the Nuwara Eliya District, in which the great mortality from starvation is said to have occurred in the years 1882 to 1885; and his statistics show that as nearly as can be ascertained the death-rate per 1,000 between 1881 and 1888 was slightly less than between 1871 and 1880, and that the population was larger in 1881 than in 1871, and in 1888 than in 1881. Mr. Moir states, at the end of his Report, that the lists referred to being very voluminous are not sent; but an abstract of them is given, from which the figures mentioned in the question are correctly quoted. Mr. Le Mesurier's letters on the subject are also included. The Secretary of State has given the whole matter the most careful consideration, and has seen no reason to doubt the soundness of Mr. Moir's conclusions, which are supported by the Registrar Generals' Returns and other statistics. He considers that while in some cases hardship was caused by too inflexible collection of arrears, there has been very grave exaggeration; and this, as I stated on the 31st of July, was from the first believed to be the case.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the figures are incorrect?

*Baron H. de WORMS: No, Sir; the figures are not incorrect.

THE CORK UNION.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the entire sum due by the Cork Union to the District Lunatic Asylum for the part maintenance of certain lunatics received from the workhouse; whether he is aware that the Vice Guardians have requested the Local Government Board to give a sanction, based on legal authority, for the payment, or part payment, of the alleged claim; and to what extent is the Cork Corporation represented on the Board of Governors of the Eglinton Asylum?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): The amount claimed by the Board of Governors of the District Lunatic Asylum in respect of the maintenance of lunatics sent to the Asylum from the workhouse appears to be £536 10s. 3d. The matter has been submitted to the Local Government Board by the Vice Guardians for a decision as to whether they are legally bound to pay for the maintenance of the inmates referred to. There are four members of the Cork Corporation on the Lunatic Asylum Board.

Dr. TANNER: What is the constitution of the Asylum Board? How is the Cork Corporation represented upon it?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Representatives of the Cork Corporation are: Alderman John Jones, Alderman Michael Murphy, Alderman J. H. Scott, and Mr. B. Sheehan.

Dr. TANNER: Has there not been considerable discussion as to whether the money can be legally paid or not?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe it is extremely likely that there has been a great deal of discussion on it. With regard to the hon. Member's inquiry as to whether it will be paid before a legal decision is come to, I beg to refer him to the answer I have just given to his question on the Paper.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, GALWAY.

Mr. FOLEY (Galway, Connemara): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with regard to the facts that the Boards of National and Intermediate Education and the Senate of the Royal University are so constituted as to include a Catholic element in the proportion of one half, that the higher paid appointments in these Institutions follow the same rule, and that this proportion is maintained by the free action of the Executive Government, there being no statutory provision in this respect, whether he is aware that the Governing Body and office bearers of Queen's College, Galway, are, and have been for some time, exclusively Protestant; and whether the Executive will make appointments in Galway on the same principle that obtains in the Institutions named above, on the ground that a distinct Ministerial pledge was given in this House that the patronage of the Crown would be so exercised as to secure, if possible, the services of Catholics in the appointments to the Queen's College, Galway?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I beg to refer the hon. Gentleman to an answer given by me to a similar question put by the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Pinkerton) in July, 1888. No change has since taken place in the *personnel* of the College.

THE FASTNET ROCK LIGHTHOUSE.

MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I have placed a question on the Paper of my intention to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will explain why tenders were not invited for the contract for boat attendance on the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse, which lapsed on the 6th of January last; when will tenders be invited, and what reason is there for the delay; when the late boat *Halcyon* was suspended from attendance, were any steps taken to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the allegations made by the crew of this boat, that their lives and the lives of the light keepers of the Fastnet Lighthouse were seriously endangered on more than one occasion through the boat's unseaworthy state; whether the Board of Trade were warned a few years ago that the boat was in a dangerous state; whether there is any intention to re-instate this alleged unseaworthy boat in attendance on the lighthouse; at what weekly cost has the steamship *Alert* been for weeks doing the work, and would he inquire whether the attendance could be carried on more cheaply and as efficiently by a local boat; how long is it intended to continue the *Alert* at this work; and is it a fact that a seaworthy boat has been offered to attend on the lighthouse at the old contract price. At the request of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade I will defer the question until Monday.

THE LAND PURCHASE BILL.

EARL OF CAVAN (Somerset, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in order to facilitate the unrestrained discussion by Irish tenants in regard to the benefits proposed to be conferred upon them by the Land Purchase Bill, he can assure the House that police reporters will be instructed not to attend public or private meetings when Members of Parliament or others address Irish tenants on this and kindred subjects?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Police reporters do not attend meetings unless they have reason to fear that a breach of the law may be committed. I am unable to understand how the presence of a police reporter can put a restraint on any discussion which is not of an illegal character.

In reply to a further question by the Earl of CAVAN,

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said: I am not aware that any reason has been adduced for altering the habitual procedure with regard to police reporters. I believe that notice is sometimes given of the intention of the police to send reporters to meetings. I do not know whether reporters will attend those meetings or not.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the amounts, for the last financial year, of the several items proposed by his Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill to constitute the contingent guarantee fund?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already taken steps for the preparation of a Return to be laid upon the Table of this House which will include the information indicated in this question. It will, I hope, be laid in ample time for the discussion on the Second Reading.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman give a Return showing the extent to which the probate and license funds will be allocated?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think that will require a separate Return. It will be sufficiently evidenced in the Bill itself.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Will the sum hitherto devoted to the encouragement of the breeding of horses for agricultural purposes be still guaranteed?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is proposed that that sum—£5,000 a year, I believe—shall be placed upon the Votes.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Has the right hon. Gentleman any objection to give a continuation of the Return granted to my hon. Friend the Member for the Rushcliffe Division (Mr. J. Ellis) from 1882 to 1889.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I gave an answer to that question to the hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division a few days ago. I said that Returns containing full information on the subject of sales by property-owners in Ireland will be laid on the Table before the Second Reading of the Land Bill.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): May I point out that the Returns are very incomplete.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member must be aware that the preparation of these Returns has thrown a great amount of work upon the officials; but if the hon. Member will discuss the subject with me I will see what I can do to comply with his wishes and render the Returns complete.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): Will the Returns be prepared before the Easter Recess?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid it will be impossible to present the Returns which hon. Members want before the Easter Recess. They will be presented immediately after the Recess, when there will be ample time to study them before the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. J. MORLEY: When will the Bill be circulated?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall be surprised and disappointed if the Bill is not circulated by Saturday morning.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the Olphert Estate forms a portion of one of the congested districts to be dealt with by the Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill introduced on the 24th instant, he proposes to give the forces of the Crown for the carrying out of evictions there?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It does not seem to me that the proposals I have laid before Parliament afford either reason or justification for my refusing protection to those engaged in carrying out the decrees of a duly constituted tribunal.

*MR. P. O'BRIEN: May I ask whether, in the interests of philanthropy, some consideration may not be paid to these unfortunate people, especially as it is intended to deal with them under the Land Purchase Bill, which the right hon. Gentleman introduced the other night? Could not the right hon. Gentleman exercise a similar pressure under the law as that exercised by his predecessor, the present President of the Board of Trade?

[No answer was given.]

THE ARRESTS AT CLONGOREY.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland if he can now state precisely the circumstances connected with the arrests last Friday morning at Clongorey; the legal authority; the refusal of the bailiffs to exhibit a warrant; the limit of punishment; the nature of the order issued by the County Court Judge; and the imprisonment of persons other than the tenant of the holding? I also wish to ask whether the tenant, Mrs. Kelly, a woman 75 years of age, was taken out of her bed at 6 o'clock in the morning?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, University of Dublin): I have now before me a copy of the order under which the arrests referred to in the question were made, and I am in a position to answer in detail the question of the hon. Member. The proceeding, as I have already stated, is of a civil character, over which the Executive has no control. It appears that Mr. O'Kelly, the landlord of the Clongorey Estate, obtained from the County Court Judge of Kildare an order in an equity civil bill proceeding restraining the defendants Mary Kelly, Michael Morressey, and Mary Morressey, their servants, agents, and workmen, from erecting on the holding of the defendant Mary Kelly any house or hut not suitable for the enjoyment of the holding as an agricultural holding, and from permitting certain buildings complained of in the civil bill to remain on the holding. A further order was made by the County Court Judge on October 14th, 1889, whereby, after stating that it appeared that the buildings mentioned in the civil bill were still standing, the Judge ordered the defendants to remove them within six weeks after personal service of the order upon them. Neither of these orders having been complied with, a further order was made on January 2, 1890, adjudging the defendants guilty of contempt of Court, and commanding the Sheriff to arrest them. The arrests in question were made by the Sheriff's Officer under the authority of the last-mentioned order. Michael and Mary Morressey were named as defendants in the civil bill decree as having been engaged with the tenant Mary Kelly in committing waste on her holding. I have no information that the bailiffs refused to show the order of the County Court Judge ordering the arrest of the defendants; but it is plain from the terms of that order that the Judge was satisfied before making it that the peremptory order of October 14 had been personally served on the defendants. The limits of imprisonment assigned by the order are until the prisoners are discharged by competent authority and due course of law. Prisoners committed for contempt of an order of the Court may be released on purging their contempt to the satisfaction of the Court. I am informed that Mary Kelly has been already discharged on the ground of ill-health.

MR. SEXTON: Three persons appear to have been arrested on this order. The tenant who, of course, had power to obey the order, and two others. As the tenant has been released from custody, will the other persons who are liable to be imprisoned for an indefinite time be released?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I imagine that it is a matter which rests entirely with the County Court Judge. The Lord Lieutenant has nothing to do with the matter.

MR. SEXTON: Then I beg to give notice that I will take an early opportunity of submitting to the House that this is a case in which it is in the power of the Executive to exercise clemency.

THE SHANNON DRAINAGE.

MR. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the river dams in course of erection at Killaloe, in connection with the Shannon Drainage, were completely swept away by the recent floods; what was the total expenditure on these works up to the time of their demolition; whether there is any evidence to show that the catastrophe was owing to negligence and incapacity in the execution of the works; and, if so, who is responsible; is he aware that the portions of the river dammed off for excavation above and below the bridge were inundated for several weeks, causing upwards of 200 workmen to be thrown out of employment in the depth of winter; why were not the works secured in the summer months, when the enclosure was laid dry, and the risk of the winter floods could be avoided; was the ordinary precaution taken to prevent leakage through the dams by using clay puddle or other approved material, or were the dams solely composed of active surface soil and the *débris* excavated from other parts of the works; was the side of the dam left exposed to the rapid current of the Shannon at that point unprotected by planks or other proper sheeting; will he inquire how it happened that the floods actually broke over the top of the embankments owing to their not being of sufficient height or width to protect the dam, though the material excavated and available on the spot for the purpose was carted half a mile away; and whether he will have full and independent inquiry made into all these particulars?

***THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The hon. Member speaks in his question of river dams in course of construction; but I would point out that the dams in question were temporary dams, constructed in the usual manner from the excavations made near their site and at other parts of the works, and it was therefore impossible to keep a separate account of their cost. They were damaged by the great flood of December last, but were not entirely swept away. It was impossible to keep men at work in the bed of the Shannon during such floods, and therefore the works were suspended before the dams received any injury whatever. There was no negligence or incapacity in the construction of the dams, which were made and maintained in the manner usual in such cases. It would have been improvident to have erected them as if they were permanent works. They can be repaired at much less cost.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what were the respective numbers in the two editions of the Report of the Special Commission, 1888; and what precedents there are for so large a reduction in price as that from 1s. 4d. to 9d?

***MR. JACKSON**: The original order was for 2,000 copies, followed by subsequent orders, raising the total number of copies of the 1s. 4d. edition to 7,000.

Twenty thousand copies of the 9d. edition have been ordered from the printer. The precedents are the Report of the Royal Commission on Housing of Working Classes, first sold at 11d., afterwards brought out and sold at 6d.; Local Government Bill, 1888, first sold at 1s. 3d., and afterwards brought out and sold at 3d.; Reports of Royal Commission on Depression of Trade, first brought out in five volumes with evidence and sold at 18s. 11d., afterwards separated and sold at 6d.; Report on Small Pox at Sheffield, originally sold at 24s., afterwards reduced to 10s.

Mr. A. ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham): May I ask whether it is not a rule in the Stationery Department that the price of public papers shall be reckoned at the cost of the paper and printing, the setting up being charged upon the Department; if so, and if the second edition of 20,000 copies of the Special Commission Report was printed from the same type as the first 7,000, does not the hon. Gentleman think the discrepancy between 1s. 4d. and 9d. is unaccountable?

*Mr. JACKSON: No, Sir. I do not think it is at all unaccountable, because the price was fixed at considerably more than it ought to have been under the rules.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON: Do not the precedents quoted relate to matters beneficial to the public; and is there any precedent for a Report of this class, which is practically of a political nature and apparently distributed for a political purpose, being issued at a cheaper rate? Was there any consultation at the Treasury before this step was taken?

*Mr. JACKSON: If the ordinary rule had been followed, as the hon. Member for the Rotherham Division (Mr. A. Acland) has pointed out, it would not have been necessary to reduce the price to 9d., because the cost might have been fixed at 9d. in the first instance.

THE FIELD OF TOSKI.

Mr. FRANCIS STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that, as stated in the *East Anglican Daily Times* of the 22nd instant, by a correspondent who visited the field of Toski, in company with several other witnesses, some five hundred Dervishes still remain unburied; and whether steps will be taken to put an end to that state of things?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have no information on the subject. Inquiry will be made as to the facts.

THE AUDIT AND SUPERVISION OF BANKRUPTCY IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is the case that the fees payable to the Accountant of the Court of Session in respect of the Audit and Supervision of Bankruptcy proceedings are payable in stamps; whether these stamps are procurable only in Edinburgh; and whether, considering the large number of bankruptcy estates in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, he would arrange for the stamps being procurable in the Stamp Office, Glasgow?

*Mr. JACKSON: The Commissioners of Inland Revenue have not had time to communicate with their representatives in Scotland in this matter since the hon. Member gave notice of his question; but they will make inquiries and see whether it is possible to comply with the request.

THE ATLANTIC MAILS.

Mr. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is within his knowledge that on her last outward passage the *City of Paris*, without mails, arrived at New York 63 hours in advance of the mail-carrying steamer *Britannic*; whether he has been informed that the Inman and White Star Lines have entered into an arrangement to take effect on 2nd April, and to continue during the summer, under which it is probable the steamer not carrying mails will arrive at New York every alternate week two days before the mail-carrying steamer; and whether, for the convenience of the mercantile public, he will publish, a fortnight in advance, the names of all steamers sailing from Queenstown to New York with Her Majesty's mails, with the dates of their departure, and also indicate the names of other steamers of high speed leaving Queenstown on the same days as the steamers carrying the mails, so that merchants may be able to address their letters to be sent by the fastest steamers?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): My Department has not yet received from New York the official Returns of the arrival of the two steamers referred to; but, according to telegraphic advices, the *City of Paris* arrived at New York about two days in advance of the *Britannic.* The *City of Paris* carried, as usual, ship-letter mails, 14 bags in all, consisting of correspondence specially superscribed for transmission by that ship. As regards the hon. Member's second question, I am informed that the White Star Company has entered into no arrangement with the Inman Company of the character referred to. As regards Question 3, the information desired by the hon. Member is already given to a considerable extent in the *Post Office Daily List.* That official publication gives, one week in advance, the name and date of sailing of each contract mail steamer to New York, and also of each non-contract steamer sailing on fixed days and at regular intervals. If it would be any convenience to the mercantile public to have this information so long as a fortnight in advance (which I think is doubtful) I will endeavour to meet that wish.

CHARGE AGAINST A LICENSED VICTUALLER.

MR. AGG-GARDNER (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that one Albert Hawkins, a licensed victualler, was acquitted by the Hurstgreen (Sussex) Magistrates, on 1st January, 1890, on a charge of selling beer during prohibited hours, on Sunday, the 24th of November last; whether he has observed that the evidence against him was given by a police constable called George Austin, who admitted that for the purpose of obtaining evidence he disguised himself as a bricklayer and gave the name of James Churchyard; that whilst in this disguise he endeavoured to induce Hawkins to sell beer to him during prohibited hours, and that on Hawkins' refusal, three times offered to pay for some beer, which Hawkins let him have as a gift; whether he is aware that in another case heard at the same Sessions Austin was proved to have incited other persons to sell or obtain liquor during prohibited hours, and that the Hurstgreen Magistrates expressed their disapproval of the action of the police in tempting people to break the law; would he state under whose instructions Austin was acting; and are any steps being taken to prevent a recurrence of such proceedings?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have obtained a Report from the Chief Constable, who informs me that it is the fact that the constable was in disguise; but he had been sent to that district for an altogether different purpose, and not at all with the view of obtaining evidence against any publican for breach of the Licensing Acts. In acting as he did in the cases quoted the constable undoubtedly exceeded his duty. His conduct was disapproved of both by the Magistrates and by the Chief Constable, who has reprimanded him, and will take every precaution in the future to prevent a recurrence of such proceedings.

POSTCARDS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the estimated actual cost of stamping 1,000,000 postcards for private persons at the Inland Revenue Office; and whether it would be cheaper to allow private persons to affix halfpenny stamps to their own postcards, which, in size and in every other respect, conform to regulations, than to compel them to buy postcards supplied by the Government contractor?

*MR. RAIKES: The estimated cost of stamping 1,000,000 postcards for private persons at the Inland Revenue Office is £16 13s. 4d. I have, I think, quite recently informed the hon. Member that the question of allowing private persons to attach halfpenny adhesive stamps to their own postcards has been for some time under the consideration of a Departmental Committee, whose Report I am daily expecting. The cost of manufacturing postcards is necessarily considerable; but these cards, as the House is aware, are re-sold at a profit, which is not the case with adhesive stamps. The substitution of private cards for official postcards, therefore, so far from being attended with a saving of £40,000 or £50,000 a year to the State, would reresult in a loss of revenue, which would equally result from the discontinuance of the charge now made at Somerset House for stamping private cards.

WAR OFFICE CONTRACTS—POWDER CASKS.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Ballincollig Powder Company, Limited, tendered for the making of the powder casks; and at what price are such casks usually supplied to the Government?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No, Sir; the Ballincollig Powder Company, Limited, did not tender for gunpowder casks; but in reply to our inquiries they gave 4s. as the price of a hand-made barrel of the ordinary trade type, which is quite unsuitable for our purposes. It is understood that they are now endeavouring to produce a barrel equal to our pattern, which is machine-made. The service powder barrel is made in the Royal Laboratory, and costs about 4s.

THE WOOD GREEN LOCAL BOARD.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has received a protest from four candidates for election to the Wood Green Local Board against the appointment as Returning Officer, at the election, of a gentleman who is a partisan of some other candidates; and whether he has sent any answer to the protest, or intends to take any action?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Local Government Board have received a Memorial signed by four of the candidates for election as members of the Wood Green Local Board objecting to the appointment of Returning Officer which has been made by the Local Board, and requesting the Board to nominate a person to act as Returning Officer. The Board have informed the Memorialists that the power of the Board to appoint a Returning Officer is limited to the case of the first election of a Local Board, and they have no authority whatever to intervene in the manner suggested.

Mr. Raikes

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Is it the fact that the person who has been appointed Returning Officer was present on Tuesday at a meeting of one of the candidates; and is it not within the power of the Local Government Board to see that the election is not conducted unfairly?

*MR. RITCHIE: I am not prepared to say what the power of the Local Government Board is; but if they find that the election has been conducted unfairly, I think they would have power to interfere. The Local Government Board, however, have no right to interfere with the appointment of Returning Officer.

THE OLDHAM UNION.

MR. LEAKE (Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has received any intimation of the appointment of Mr. William Hall as relieving officer in one of the districts of the Oldham Union; whether he has received a communication from the clerk of the Union that Mr. Hall's writing, orthography, composition, and use of figures are not such as to commend themselves to any business man who has books to keep, and certainly not to him (the clerk) as the Public Officer of the Union; whether he is aware that it was admitted by one of the Guardians who supported Mr. Hall, that he was not as well qualified as some of the other candidates; whether it was also stated that Mr. Hall would take lessons in handwriting, and that Mr. Hall was selected from 87 applicants by a party majority of 11 to 8, and has his appointment received the sanction of the Local Government Board?

*MR. RITCHIE: The Local Government Board have received a Report of the appointment of Mr. Hall as relieving officer in the Oldham Union. I have received no communication from the clerk to the Guardians containing the statements referred to in the question; but the clerk, in reporting the appointment, stated that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board of Guardians and several other members desired him to call the attention of the Board to the style of writing and the mistakes in spelling and composition of Mr. Hall's letters, and that they were strongly of opinion that if his appointment were sanctioned inconvenience and difficulty would result. I have seen no Report of the proceedings at the meeting at which Mr. Hall was elected, and I am unable, therefore, to reply to the questions with regard to the admissions and statements alleged to have been made as to Mr. Hall. Neither am I aware what was the number of Guardians voting for and against his appointment. The appointment has not yet received the sanction of the Local Government Board, and is under their consideration.

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION.

Mr. CRILLY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for the Home Department what is the reason for the delay in distributing the Twelfth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, along with the Five Appendices, which were presented to the House on the 24th of August, 1889; whether he can say when these volumes will be in the hands of Members; and whether he approves of the system of presenting Papers and Returns to the House in dummy, when, as occurs in many instances, months elapse before the actual copies of these Papers and Returns are put in circulation?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart Wortley, Sheffield, Hallam): The Secretary of State is informed by the Commissioners that the delay in distributing the Twelfth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, with the Five Appendices, which were presented to the House on the 12th of August last, is due to difficulty in obtaining certain proofs from the printers, to the great labour involved in making the indexes, and to the limited nature of the staff and resources at the disposal of the Commissioners for such work. The Commissioners fully expected last year that the Report would be issued during the recess, and they have now informed the Secretary of State that its issue may be confidently expected during the present month. The Commissioners have expressed their regret at the delay and inconvenience caused, and their intention to act in future as closely as possible in accordance with the order of this House.

Mr. CRILLY: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that two of the volumes issued last year had no index?

*Mr. STUART WORTLEY: That is probably their reason for delaying the issue of the present volume until com pletion of the indexes.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

Admiral MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the sentences passed by the Recorder at the Central Criminal Court, as publshed in the *Times* of the 25th instant, on three boys, aged respectively 15, 14, and 13, of nine and six months' imprisonment with hard labour, for stealing 6s., a chisel, and other articles, from a church and a chapel; and whether the boys, being so young, could be sent to a reformatory instead of to prison with hard labour?

Mr. MATTHEWS: My attention has been called to this case, and I am now making inquiries into the circumstances, and will inform my hon. and gallant Friend of the result. The boys could have been sentenced to detention in a reformatory instead of to a term of imprisonment with hard labour.

PORTUGAL AND EAST AFRICA.

Mr. PHILIP STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, having regard to the declaration of Her Majesty's Government that they insisted upon the restoration by Portugal of the *status quo* in the disputed territory as a preliminary step and condition for the discussion of the main question, and for placing it on diplomatic ground, the *status quo* has now been sufficiently restored; and, if so, whether the two Governments have entered upon, or intend entering upon, the discussion of their respective claims in the territory in question, and what course it is proposed to take if they cannot agree?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: There is no foundation for the declaration attributed to Her Majesty's Government. We simply insisted on the withdrawal of the Portuguese forces from the British Protectorate. There was no condition as to the restoration of the *status quo* (an expression which has been used by the Portuguese newspaper Press as implying that Great Britain also must abstain from exercising protectorate) as a preliminary step to the discussion of the main question and placing it on diplomatic ground.

Mr. P. STANHOPE: Can the right hon. Gentleman give the House any information as to the exact condition of the negotiations?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: There are some points which are still under negotiation between the two Governments; but I would rather not enter into particulars.

THE EASTER HOLIDAYS AND PUBLIC BUSINESS.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, if, in fixing the period of the Easter adjournment, he will consider the desirability of making it as short as possible, with a view to the grant of a reasonable recess in mid-Session at Whitsuntide?

Mr. J. MORLEY: May I further ask the First Lord of the Treasury, if the Tithe Bill is read a second time this week, on what day next week, and from when to when, he will move the adjournment of the House?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I have to consider the convenience of the House and also the exigencies of the public business. But I hope, on the assumption to which the right hon. Gentleman refers, that the Tithe Bill will be read a second time to-morrow, and also on the further assumption that we are able to get Votes in Supply in Class 1, on Monday, which are absolutely necessary, I shall be prepared to move the adjournment at a morning sitting on Tuesday. But in the event of any disappointment I shall be obliged to ask the House to sit for Supply on Tuesday, and delay the adjournment till a later day. I have had to consider carefully the condition of business, both inside and outside the House. It has been represented to me that Easter week is one in which hon. Members are engaged in their respective counties on the County Councils almost all over the country; and, having regard to the duties they have to discharge in the counties as well as in the House, I have thought it better on the whole to propose that the House should adjourn till Monday, the 14th. That, I think, is an arrangement which, on the whole, although it gives a longer holiday than I should have wished to propose, will be satisfactory. I am glad to see that a proposition of that kind is not altogether unwelcome to Gentlemen opposite, who do not generally accept suggestions made from this Bench. If we can count on the assistance of the House on Monday I shall be prepared to move the adjournment on Tuesday.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Do we understand that if the Votes are taken on Monday there will be nothing on Tuesday except the Motion to adjourn?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Yes, Sir; unless there is some Bill of a minor character which we wish to advance a stage.

Mr. J. MORLEY: In that case, will the Budget still be taken on the 14th instant?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think it would be for the convenience of the House to adhere to that arrangement. But the subject can be mentioned again to-morrow. I should have said that the Report of Supply must be taken on Tuesday before the adjournment.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: How much money and how many Votes is it absolutely necessary to get before Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman will, I am sure, give us his assistance; he is always so ready to come to the assistance of the Government, and when the time comes I will give him all the information which is necessary.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: As it has always been the custom after the Recess to take Supply on the first night, will it not be more convenient to have the Budget on Thursday instead of Monday?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: If I understand that to be the general wish of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen I will undertake that this arrangement shall be made. But I thought, looking to the importance of the Budget, that it was desirable to take it as early as possible.

Mr. SEXTON: I assume that neither Irish Supply nor the Second Reading of the Land Bill will be taken before Thursday, the 17th?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: That is so.

CANADA.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the important character of the loyal Address to the Queen recently adopted by the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, in which the fixed resolve of the Canadian people to maintain the political connection between Canada and the rest of the British Empire is affirmed, he will cause the full text of the Address to be published in the Gazette?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Address has not yet been received, and, as was stated in reply to the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Sir J. Colomb), a few days back, it is unusual to present such Addresses to Parliament. There will, however, of course, be no objection on the part of the Government when the Address has arrived to advise Her Majesty that it should be given as an exception to the general rule.

GAS STOKERS.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the widespread danger and disaster which must inevitably ensue if a large town is suddenly put in darkness by a strike among gas stokers, and other workmen associated with them in the production of gas, the Government propose to introduce any legislation during the present Session to put this class of artisans in the same category as sailors and postmen, and to limit or regulate their power of indiscriminate striking?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Government quite recognise the gravity of the subject to which my hon. Friend alludes, but, having regard to the ability with which the companies and authorities who are responsible for the supply of gas met the difficulties which were occasioned by the strike without the assistance of any extraordinary powers, Her Majesty's Government do not think it is necessary for them to propose legislation which would interfere between employers and employed. They rely rather on the moderation and good sense of the parties to controversies of this character, and to the powerful influence of public opinion upon them.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND THE INCOME TAX.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that at Rushden, Northants, Income Tax under Schedule A is still demanded, and has been this year collected from three Friendly Societies, namely, the Rushden Friendly Society, the Rushden Tradesmen's Benefit Club, and the Society of Rechabites, in spite of the provisions of the 12th section of "The Revenue Act, 1889;" whether the further collection of the tax will be prevented by clearer and fuller instructions to the Surveyor of taxes; and whether he will direct the repayment of taxes thus collected in error?

*MR. JACKSON: The hon. Member must recollect that in all cases of exemption from Income Tax no cessation of the demand takes place, but after the demand has been made persons entitled to exemption can secure repayment. Friendly Societies are entitled to exemption under certain conditions, and if the Rushden Friendly Societies claim exemption in the usual way every facility will be accorded them for obtaining repayment; but the demand must be made as in all other similar cases.

SHOPS (WEEKLY HALF-HOLIDAY) BILL.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (University of London): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Dulwich (Mr. Blundell Maple) whether, in accordance with the suggestion of the Home Secretary, he would withdraw the block and allow him to move the Second Reading of the Shops (Weekly Half-Holiday) Bill.

*MR. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich): The right hon. Baronet requests me to withdraw my opposition to his Shops (Weekly Half-Holiday) Bill, and let it unanimously pass its Second Reading, with the understanding that it be referred to a Committee. He proposes to close shops for the sake of giving the shop assistants a half-holiday. Having introduced a Bill myself which will accomplish the desired purpose, of giving a half-holiday, without closing the shops, I must decline to recognise the necessity for interfering with the liberty of the shopkeepers and stall-holders of

Great Britain and Ireland, as proposed by the right hon. Baronet.

Sir J. LUBBOCK: I should like further to ask the hon. Gentleman if he will consent to both Bills being referred to the same Committee, in order that the Committee may have an opportunity of judging between them?

***Mr. BLUNDELL MAPLE**: No.

ARMY PENSIONERS.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in cases where Army pensioners make habitual use of workhouses, and discharge themselves just before their pensions become due, he will consider the expediency of providing that an application by the Guardians for the direct payment to them of such portion of the pension as may be due to the Union shall be entertained by the War Office, and that the claim shall be sent in and discharged by the central office in London and not elsewhere; and whether in the case of Army Reserve men in workhouses, similar provisions can be made?

***Mr. E. STANHOPE**: In the case of an Army pensioner who makes habitual use of a workhouse, the Guardians may apply direct to the War Office as to the payment of the pension, but the War Office will have to refer the case to the local paymaster for report, and whatever payment may be decided upon would have to be made by that officer. Similar provision cannot be made in the case of an Army Reserve man, whose pay is a retaining fee for liability to serve, and by paragraph 156 of the regulations issued under the Reserve Forces Act it is exempt from stoppage on behalf of Parochial Authorities for the maintenance of the man or his family.

STRIKING A NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER.

Mr. BOND (Dorset, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the sentence of five years' penal servitude inflicted upon William Ballock for striking a non-commissioned officer with the open hand; and whether he will take this case into his consideration, with a view to the remission of a portion of the sentence?

***The FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY** (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): I presume the hon. Member refers to the case of William McGill Ballock, ordinary seaman of H.M.S. *Sultan*, who was condemned, in 1888, to five years' penal servitude for striking with his clenched fist his superior officer, a Boatswain R.N. This was a very gross case of insubordination, as there was not the slightest provocation to the offence; and, looking to the prisoner's previous indifferent character, there seems to be no reason for re-considering his sentence out of the usual routine.

THE NEW CODE.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): When will the new Code be in the hands of Members, and how long will it be allowed to lie on the table? What course does the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Council propose to take in regard to it?

Sir W. HART DYKE: The new Code will be in the hands of hon. Members to-morrow evening, and proper time will be given for its consideration.

Mr. MUNDELLA: The time that must intervene before it comes into operation will expire during the Easter recess, unless it is suspended by a Minute in Council.

Sir W. HART DYKE: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that any such possible contingency will be guarded against.

THE ALLOTMENTS BILL.

***Captain VERNEY** (Bucks, N.): Will the Allotments Bill be proceeded with before Easter?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: I am afraid there is no chance of that.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY BILL.

In reply to Mr. J. Ellis,

Mr. MATTHEWS said: The Employers' Liability Bill will be presented this week.

NEW MEMBER.

New Member sworn,—James Alexander Rentoul, esquire, for County of Down (East Down Division.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LUNACY CONSOLIDATION (RE-COMMITTED) BILL [LORDS.]—(No. 191.)

(4.22.) Order for Committee read.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses up to 268, inclusive, agreed to.

Clause 269.

(4.25.) MR. A. PEASE (York): I wish to draw attention to this clause, and to ask whether it has been compared with Section 64 of the Act of last year. Has the Solicitor General noticed that in the Bill the words "Visiting Committee" occur in Sub-section 2, instead of the words "Local Authority," which occurred in the Act of last year. In his opinion do the words "Visiting Committee" cover and provide for all contingencies?

(4.26.) THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir E. CLARKE, Plymouth): My attention has only lately been called to the matter, but I have compared the Bill and the Act, and my impression is that the words of the Bill, taken in connection with the provisions of the interpretation clause of the Act of last year, do cover all contingencies. The intention is to reproduce the exact provisions of the Act as it passed this House.

(4.27.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): This purports to be a Bill for the consolidation of certain of the enactments respecting lunatics, but it does not extend to Ireland or Scotland, and I find that there are a large number of existing Statutes which are not alluded to in the Bill at all. For instance, an Act of George III., passed in the year 1800, and the following Statutes passed in the reign of Her present Majesty—12 and 13 Vic., relating to borough contributions in respect of lunatics; 13 and 14 Vic., Acts, relating to the County Palatine of Lancashire and to married women; 14 and 15 Vic. c. 81, in reference to the removal of lunatics, and 16 and 17 Vic., relating to the jurisdiction of the Lord Chancellor and the Lords Justices. Then, again, there are other Acts not mentioned, which have been passed within the last 10 years, namely, 42 and 43 Vic., for the relief of pauper lunatics; 46 and 47 Vic., an Act relating to criminal lunatics, and 47 and 48 Vic. c. 46, which contains provisions relating to sailors, whether belonging to the Navy or to the Marine Service. As recently as 1886, there was an Act passed relating to the case of lunatics who might be Members of the House of Commons. That also is excluded. Under the Statute, the Commissioners of Lunacy are bound to report to the Speaker the case of any Member who is taken to a lunatic asylum. There is no such provision in the present Bill, and I fail to understand how the Bill can be regarded as a Consolidation Bill. It appears to consolidate certain Statutes, but others are left intact and unrepealed. Has that been done deliberately, or is it proposed hereafter to bring in another Consolidation Bill?

(4.30.) SIR E. CLARKE: This Bill does not purpose to consolidate all the enactments relating to lunacy, and the cases mentioned by hon. Members are expressly excluded by Clauses 270 and 274 from its operation. With regard to Members of the House becoming insane, I may point out that it is intended to deal with the administration of the law so far as it requires to be put in force, and our attention has not been called to the necessity for re-enacting those special provisions. The whole Act has been carefully gone through more than once in order to ensure a complete consolidation, and I think hon. Members will find it contains all that is required.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."—(*Sir E. Clarke.*)

(4.32.) MR. J. MORLEY: I hope the First Lord of the Treasury will communicate with some of his Colleagues who are in the habit of saying that the Opposition exist for nothing but to obstruct public business, and will draw attention to the fact that the Opposition have afforded great facilities for the passing of this Bill.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I shall certainly have great pleasure in calling their attention to the fact that the Opposition have given the greatest possible facilities for the passing of a Lunacy Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time and passed without Amendment.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY AND REDEMPTION BILL.—(No. 169.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.33.) *THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, Bristol, W.): In calling the attention of the House to this subject, I think I need hardly preface my remarks by reminding the House that it is a question of so difficult and complicated a character, and one that excites so many different interests, that no Government would willingly press it as we have continually pressed it upon the attention of Parliament without being convinced that there is urgent necessity for the amendment of the law. But in the observations I shall make I do not intend to address my arguments to the present appropriation of the tithe. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has said that we should carefully sever in our minds those questions which relate to the present appropriation of the tithe from those questions which relate to the tithe itself. This is a Bill which relates to the tithe itself. We have no intention of dealing with questions which relate to the appropriation of the tithe. That appropriation we hold should continue as it is at present. With regard to lay tithe, whether it belongs to individuals or Corporations, I will say that it rests upon as good a title as any other property, and it could be no more equitably applied to public purposes without compensation to its owners than could the watch in the pocket of any Member of this House. In the case of ecclesiastical tithe we hold that it is not national property in the sense of my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea; we hold that it is the property of the Church or of her ministers, held by her or by them in return for certain religious services for the benefit of the nation at large, and that Parliament has no right to devote it to other purposes. I do not expect many hon. Members opposite to agree to that view, but at least they will agree with the words of their leader when he said that the tithe itself is a property which ought to be respected and preserved, with due regard to the rights and position of all concerned in the administration and use of it. That it should receive that consideration and respect from those who hold it to be, as he holds it, the national property, and that in giving it that consideration we must take care that in our disputes about modes and circumstances we do not allow it to be frittered away. Whatever opinion we may hold as to the proper destination of tithe, this, at least, is not susceptible of argument to the contrary, that it is now a debt legally due from the tithepayer to the tithe owner, and I cannot understand how anyone can argue that it is right that the payment of a debt which is legally due should be withheld because the debtor does not agree with or approve the purpose to which his creditor will apply the money if it is paid. Now, I perceive with surprise that the hon. Member for Leicester, of all the Members of this House, has placed on the Paper a notice for the rejection of this Bill, because I read some words of his the other day, in which he expressed the opinion that it is the duty of those who regard the nation as ultimate landowners to keep a firm grip on that part of the rent which was accepted in 1836 as an equivalent for tithes. What I would submit is that he is not keeping a firm grip on the tithe under the present state of the law. I wish I could put before the House full statistics of the amount of tithes unpaid in Wales alone during the last three years. But it is impossible to obtain such statistics, because they can be obtained only from individual tithe owners, who would be reluctant to state their losses lest they might be made a ground for additional losses in future. But I have the facts with regard to 75 parishes in the diocese of St. Asaph, and I will state them to the House. In those parishes, during the two years 1888 and 1889, a sum of £38,918 of ecclesiastical tithe was due. Of that sum £10,230 remains unpaid, and £3,000 has been expended in compelling payment of the rest. Now, I can show that that non-payment has not been due to a general inability to pay, but that the tithe has been purposely withheld in large proportions in individual cases

Of these 75 parishes, in 42 between 10 and 20 per cent is unpaid; in 19 parishes, between 20 and 30 per cent; in seven parishes, between 30 and 40 per cent; in four parishes, between 40 and 50 per cent; and in three parishes, between 50 and 60 per cent. I will not dwell on the hardship to the clergy of this state of things. I am alluding, as the House will understand, simply to ecclesiastical tithes. I will not dwell, I say, upon the hardship to the clergy, although I think I should remind the House that in the case of the Welsh clergy no one can say that they are wealthy, grasping, or hard landlords; no one can say that it is their fault—if it be a wrong to anyone—that the Church is established. They are poor men, at any rate; men of small private means; men who have devoted their lives to the Church in the faith that the law will secure to them a small but an adequate subsistence; and it seems to me a strange Christianity which passes by, without regard to the suffering of such men as these—sufferings which have in some cases come very near starvation—and which would refuse to them the payment of their legal due, not from inability, but from very much less worthy motives. I do not know whether I shall be told that the proportion of tithe unpaid, after all, does not amount to much. I would say this, that the example of non-payment is very infectious, and if it is allowed to continue I feel quite sure of this, that it will be so widely followed that the funds from which hon. Members opposite expect to derive in future great things for Wales will become little more than a voluntary rate, and will gradually disappear. Now, can that be a result which hon. Members below the Gangway desire to promote? I can understand their objection to the present appropriation of tithes; but I cannot understand their opposing a Bill which does not touch the present appropriation of tithes, but which simply desires to secure that they will continue to be paid. The hon. Member for Leicester may think that he is doing a good deed in endeavouring to deprive parsons of their tithe, but the result will be that the tithe of which they are deprived will not long remain in the pockets of the tenant-farmers. It is absolutely certain that when a farmer has contracted to pay tithe rent-charge and declines to fulfil his obligation when he is able to do so, some other person will soon offer a higher rent to his landlord, that farmer will disappear, and the tithe will go into the pocket of the landlord. Is that the result which the hon. Member for Leicester desires? I can understand that the Liberation Society will praise him for opposing the Bill, but any praise of theirs will be outweighed by the condemnation those in favour of land nationalisation will bestow upon him for making over to the landlords a property which belongs neither to the owners nor occupiers of the land, and which his great predecessor in spoliation, King Henry VIII., took very good care they should not have after he despoiled the monasteries centuries ago. If my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea could have his way to-morrow, if he could by a stroke of the pen devote ecclesiastical tithe to those educational purposes which he had at one time in his mind, or to those large and vague financial purposes which he now seems to threaten the House with, I would still see sufficient reason and necessity for the measure of which I am moving the Second Reading. This matter is not only a Welsh one. No doubt it is only in Wales that those disgraceful riots and disturbances, that open resistance to the payment of tithe, which seems to have been copied from Irish models, have occurred; but in other places besides Wales there is a strong and mistaken feeling in the minds of tenant-farmers that the tithe is a burden on them, owing to the fact that under the existing law they are made parties to a transaction between tithe owner and tithepayer, in which they have no real interest whatever. The Tithe Commutation Act intended tithe to be paid by the owner of the land; and it is, perhaps, no wonder that the system which has been so widely adopted has led the tenant to believe that he bears the burden of a charge which certainly ultimately in any case must fall on his landlord. The object of the first part of the Bill, therefore, is to carry out the principle which I think was accepted with unanimity by the House last August, and to impose the liability for the payment of tithe directly on the landlord. An occupier will not in future be liable to the payment of tithe, and will be free, where the land is let, from being harassed by distraint for it. The liability will be, in all cases, on the owner, to be enforced by a Receiver appointed by the County Court. When an occupier has contracted to pay tithe rent-charge before the beginning of this Act, the tithe rent-charge paid by the owner will be added to the rent until it is otherwise agreed between him and his landlord. I do not think that anyone can contend that this is not a change which is to the obvious advantage of the tenant-farmer. In the present state of the land market he is able whenever he likes, practically, if the arrangement which the Bill provides is considered by him to be unfair to himself, to make a fresh arrangement with his landlord; and as everybody knows during the past 10 years there have been numerous instances throughout the country where tithe, having been formerly paid under an agreement by the tenants, the liability by mutual agreement has been transferred from the tenants to the landlord. Of course, the change will be an advantage, generally speaking, to the tithe owner for obvious reasons, but it is one, as I think, which the House will see involves an alteration in the security for the tithe. At present the security for the tithe, now that the occupier is liable, is the stock or produce of the land. That stock or produce, being the property of the occupier, and not of the owner, can no longer be security when the liability is placed directly on the owner. You must maintain, I think, the principle of the Tithe Commutation Act, which was that no personal liability should be imposed on anyone for the payment of the tithe. You must also maintain what was practically the principle of that Act, that nothing should be liable to the payment of tithe except that which arises out of titheable land. Therefore, maintaining both those principles, it is proposed that the new security for the tithes shall be that which is the produce of titheable land to the owner—namely, the net rent. Of course, it is not an easy thing to define what is the net rent of the land to the owner. In previous Bills it was defined as that which the County Court Judge should decide to be the net profit of the year for which the tithe was due, and the Bills provided that that tithe should never exceed that amount. That raised, when examined, several very important difficulties. In the first place, was such net profit that which the owner had actually received or that which he might have received? It is obvious if it was defined as that which he had actually received during the year it would be open to a landowner, by collusion with his tenant, to remit a portion of his rent for a time or to postpone the payment of his rent, and thus absolutely defraud the tithe owner of what was due to him. On the other hand, where the land was not let, I should maintain that it would be absolutely impossible to discover what had been the net profit of the land to the owner and occupier in any particular year. You can only discover that by taking an average of years and considering what the land would let for from year to year, because anyone who knows anything about the matter will be aware that it would be perfectly easy so to manipulate farm accounts as to show no profit at all in any one year when a considerable profit might really have been made and put into improvements of stock or improvements on the land. Therefore, we have felt that net rent should be defined practically as the rent which the land would let at from year to year, and taking that view we have felt that the County Court Judge was not the proper person to decide upon it. He may have no knowledge of the particular locality. He is not a tribunal for valuation. The proper authority to decide upon it is the tribunal of valuation for the district, which is the Assessment Committee for the Union; and, therefore, we have inserted in the Bill provisions under which the tithe-payer can obtain a special rateable value from the Assessment Committee of the Union, and with that special rateable value can appeal to the County Court Judge to reduce the tithe payable by him for that year to an amount not exceeding the special rateable value of the land on which the tithe is paid. I will endeavour by an example to explain the working of the 2nd clause. Suppose two farms in a parish, each of them let at a rent of £150 a year. Under the ordinary system the gross estimated rental of those two farms would be fixed at £150 each. Suppose one of them subject to tithe of £75 a year. In that case the gross estimated rental of the titheable farm to the occupier of it would be put at £75 a year, and the tithe of £75 on the farm would be assessed to the owner of the tithe. Suppose the rental of those two farms reduced to £70 a year each, the tithe remaining the same as before. Then the occupiers would both appeal against their assessments, and the gross estimated rental on the same principle would be reduced, that of the tithe-free farm to £70 and that of the titheable farm would disappear altogether; but the owner of tithe on the titheable farm would still continue to be assessed to the tithe at £75. That would be the case under the existing law; but now would step in the operation of the 2nd clause of this Bill. The payer of the tithe on the titheable farm would appeal to the Assessment Committee to give him a special rateable value. He would prove that he let his farm for £70 a year, although he paid a tithe of £75. They would reduce the gross estimated rental of the tithe from £75 to £70. A deduction of 10 per cent., which is the usual deduction in farms, would then be allowed in calculating the rateable value from the gross estimated rental, and that would bring the special rateable value of that farm to £63. Then the £63, *minus* any quit rent, would be the sum which the County Court Judge would decide would be the tithe due to the tithe owner instead of £75. I would remind the House that this provision is merely an adaptation of the provisions of the Act of 1836 to the change which imposes direct liability on the owner. Under the provisions of the Act of 1836 where there is no produce there will be no tithe, and where there is only an amount of produce corresponding to a certain amount of tithe it is all the tithe owner can recover. I believe in those provisions we shall have a change in the law which will be of advantage to all the classes concerned. It will be a fair relief to the tithe payer, but it will also be an advantage to the tithe owner, because it is surely very much better for him to obtain a reduced tithe than to be put to the loss and inconvenience of having the land thrown out of cultivation altogether, or to having to cultivate it himself. It will be an advantage to the public, because so long as there is any rateable value of land at all, so long will there be a reason why a tithe payer should keep it in cultivation, and the tithe will cease altogether in the almost impossible case of there being no rateable value of the land at all. I would submit to the House that those provisions of the Bill are no more than just to the tithepayer. Many suggestions, however, have been made that they are not sufficiently just, and that in return for the imposition of a direct liability upon the owner of the land some allowance should be made to him by this Bill. Reference has been made in some quarters to the allowance of 5 per cent., which was one of the provisions in the original drafts of the Bill of 1887. I can only say with regard to that that grave objections were made to it at the time, because a general average of that sort would work unfairly in many particular cases. Of course, where it is the present case that the owner of the land pays tithe, as often happens, without any charge whatever to the owner of tithe, it would hardly be fair to charge the owner of tithe with a deduction of 5 per cent. on account of the passing of this Bill. Where the collection from the occupier now costs less than 5 per cent. to the owner of the tithe, as it often does, there also it would seem to be unfair to charge him with a deduction of 5 per cent. on account of the passing of this Bill. Where, as it sometimes might happen, the tithe is now paid by a single large occupier for land belonging to several non-resident owners, and the Bill makes a change in the payment of tithe by those non-resident owners instead of by the single occupier, you certainly could not charge the tithe owner for what is no benefit to him at all. This appeared to us to be a sufficient objection to prevent us from inserting in the Bill the provision that there should be an average deduction of 5 per cent. from the tithe. But a larger suggestion has been made, namely, that there should be some re-opening of the tithe settlement of 1836. I should like to know what is meant by the suggestion. You certainly cannot re-open the tithe settlement of 1836, if you mean by that re-opening the award by which the sum to be paid in each parish by way of rent-charge instead of tithe was fixed as the average sum received for tithe during the preceding seven years, because the *data* are gone upon which the award was made. But it would be possible to re-open the process by which, under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836, that award was converted into a money payment varying from year to year—I mean the system of corn averages. The Act of 1836 provides that the rent-charge, when ascertained by the award, shall be commuted into a payment varying with the annual value of corn. The suggestion has been made, and it was carefully considered by the Corn Averages Committee of 1888, that this subject should be re-opened, so as to compel the corn averages to be calculated on the first sales, instead of the re-sales of corn, and also to include unsold corn in the average. I believe the latter proposition would be absolutely impossible in practice, because I do not see how you can ascertain the market price of unmarketed corn. As regards the first proposal, I will only say that these averages have ever since the Tithe Commutation Act been calculated not on growers' prices, but on market prices. Market prices must include all expense and profits between the producer and the consumer. But whether these suggestions are feasible or not, I would impress upon the House that the adoption of either of them would amount to re-opening the system of corn averages, and that in any such re-opening the tithe owner would have a just right to demand that the whole subject should be revised, and that other articles of agricultural produce, besides wheat, barley, and oats, should be taken into consideration in the calculation of averages, such as meat, hay, and wool. I can assure the House it would be absolutely impossible to alter that system by the insertion of other articles, or by varying the proportions of the articles in any way but one to the advantage of the tithepayer. The only way in which the present system of corn averages could be varied to the advantage of the tithepayer would be by taking the averages solely upon wheat, or in a larger proportion upon wheat than at present. That proposition was made and rejected at the time of the discussion on the Tithe Commutation Act. If it was not just at that date, it could not be held just now, when the proportion of wheat produced in this country to the amount of barley and oats is very much less than it was at the time of the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act. On all these grounds I can hardly believe there can be any real argument in favour of re-opening the system of corn averages. I have this further argument against it: that there is no ground for any proposition which would involve a general or universal reduction of tithe. There is unquestionably in certain parts of the country a very considerable grievance—a grievance with which I sympathise myself most heartily, and a grievance which I can assure the hon. Member for Leicester is not due, as he supposes, to fox hunting, or the preservation of ground game. What is the grievance? It is that in certain parts of England, particularly in Essex and Berkshire, the value of the land on which tithe is charged has deteriorated since the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act more than the reduction of 22 per cent. in the value of the tithe as fixed by the Act. Where the land has deteriorated less than 22 per cent., or where it has increased in value since that time, then, if there is any grievance, it is that of the tithe owner. The only possible grievance to the tithepayer is where the land has decreased more than 22 per cent. in value. I think I have shown that there is no ground for a general re-valuation of tithe. But would a partial re-valuation be possible? The suggestion has been put forward that there might be a re-valuation of tithe in parts of England where the grievance which I have just mentioned exists. What would that mean? It would mean that where the Act of 1836 has given a good bargain to the tithe owner, you should annul that bargain, but where it has given him a bad bargain he should be held to it. It does not appear to me that such a proposal would be consistent with justice. There are tithe owners, like the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Colleges at the Universities, which own tithe in many parts of England; if you lowered tithe on these grounds in some parts of England, surely you ought to raise it where it is less than a certain proportion of the value of the land in other parts of England. But even in individual parishes in Essex and Berkshire; it might be found that one farm in a parish, perhaps through neglect, has fallen very heavily in value, while other land in the parish might have been much improved in value by the expenditure on buildings by the landowner. Would it be fair to the tithe-owner to lower the tithe on the farm which has fallen in value, and not to raise it on the farm which has improved in value by reason of the owner's investing his capital in it? But would it be fair to the tithe-payer to raise it on the land which has increased in value? It would be most unjust towards the landowner, who, relying on the settlement of 1836, and the abolition of the growing tithe, has invested his capital in improving his land. There may be a change in the circumstances of agriculture some day. I devoutly hope there will be, and that the value of land will go up again. If you reduced the tithe now on land which had fallen in value, ought you not to raise it again if the value of that land increased? If so, have you not struck a fatal blow at the principle of the abolition of the growing tithe, which was the great advantage of the Tithe Commutation Act, and which was more beneficial to agriculture in this country than anything else that has been done by it? It may be asked, "Is there anything in this Bill to meet the grievance of the tithepayer?" That brings me to the part of the Bill which relates to redemption. Provisions as to redemption, I think I shall show, are a boon to the tithepayer as well as the tithe owner, and may be a special boon to those parts of the country most affected by agricultural depression. We have not thought it right to propose anything like a compulsory or universal redemption of tithe. I do not believe that is desired by the tithe owner or the tithepayer at any price which an impartial tribunal would award as a fair price to the parties concerned. What we have thought it right to do is so to alter the law as to afford to either party desiring to redeem, every facility that can be granted for the purpose consistent with justice. The law with respect to tithe redemption in ordinary cases at the present time allows the Board of Agriculture, if they see fit, to order the redemption of tithe under 20s. a year at a price equal to 25 times the commuted amount, on the application either of the titheowner or tithepayer; and the redemption of tithe over 20s. a year at a price not less than 25 times the commuted amount, on the joint application of tithe owner and tithepayer, with consent of the Bishop and patron, where the tithe owner is the incumbent of a benefice; and it makes no provision which would enable the tithepayer to arrange to pay by way of instalments the capital sum fixed for redemption of the tithe. The provisions of the law with regard to redemption at the present moment are a dead letter. The Land Commissioners, to whom the Board of Agriculture have now succeeded, inform me that they did not think it fair to enforce upon the tithepayer the redemption of the small tithe at a price 25 times its commuted amount; and with regard to the redemption of the larger tithe it is obvious that with £100 tithe at the price of £78, and no allowance for rates and taxes, very few tithepayers would care to redeem at the commuted amount. What we propose in lieu of the present system is this—to abolish the limit of 25 times the commuted amount, and to allow the Board of Agriculture to fix the price in cases below 20s., or in the case of building land. In the case of lay tithe of a higher amount than 20s., the duty of the Board of Agriculture would be simply to sanction any agreement the parties might arrive at. In the case of ecclesiastical tithe over 20s., their duty is proposed to be the same, except that, in accordance with the precedent of the Glebe Lands Act, 1888, they may overrule the objections of the Bishop and patron on satisfying themselves that the redemption is for the permanent benefit of the benefice. Now, I would call attention to an important provision in Clause 10. In deciding on this, and in fixing a price for the redemption of the tithe, the Board of Agriculture will have regard, not as now to the commuted amount of the tithe, but to any increase or decrease on the current year and the six previous years, in the annual sum payable on account of tithe, which is, of course, a very different thing, and to the amount of rates and taxes charged on it during that time for which no allowance can be made now—not to any fixed number of years' purchase, but to the circumstances of each particular case, and especially to any such increase or decrease in the proportion between the annual value of the tithe rent-charge and of the land as may affect the security of the tithe rent-charge. The principle upon which these provisions are based is this. that you cannot fairly settle this matter on a system of averages. You must deal with the redemption of tithe as the commutation of tithe was dealt with, according to the circumstances of each particular case. Where the rates are low, and the amount of the tithe in proportion to the annual value of the land out of which it springs is low, so that the security is good, of course, in such a case the price of redemption would be high. But in those cases in Essex and Berkshire to which I have alluded, where the rates have become, owing to the depreciation in the value of other property in the parish, a tremendous burden on the tithe owner, and are now very high, and where the amount of the tithe, perhaps, almost swallows up the value of the land out of which it springs, so that the security for the tithe is very much reduced, there obviously the price of the tithe would be very low. The proposition is that each case shall be judged on its own merits. Now, I quite admit that redemption in each case is to be voluntary on both sides. But the sensible tithe owner would surely consider the risk he runs from the diminution of security and the increase of his rates, and would consent to redemption on fair terms, even though it might be at a comparatively low price. I need not dwell upon the advantage to the tithe owner and the tithepayer of increased facility for the redemption of small tithes or of tithes payable on land which is to be divided into small plots for building or other purposes. A small tithe is a nuisance to the tithepayer, and a great source of trouble and expense in collection to the tithe owner, and obviously it is the interest of the tithe owner to redeem such tithe on a very much less number of years' purchase than 25 years, which is now the *minimum* fixed by law. The tithe on land to be cut up into small plots for building or other purposes certainly ought to be redeemed in the public interest. It is not well that the owner should sell the land to a number of small freeholders, charged with little payments of this kind, of which the purchaser may be absolutely ignorant when he agrees to buy. We have inserted in the Bill provisions for enabling the tithepayer, where redemption has been agreed upon, to provide the capital sum for redemption in a manner which shall be easy to himself. Where lay tithe is concerned he will be enabled to charge his settled estate, or other estate, with a capital sum or with an annuity for its redemption. Where the tithe is ecclesiastical tithe he will pay the price of redemption by annual payments for 50 years, of 4¼ per cent. on the capital sum to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. They will form a Tithe Redemption Fund; and out of it they will pay interest at the rate of 3⅜ per cent. on the redemption price to the owner of the tithe which has been redeemed. I do not think I need enter into the minor details of the Bill; and I have really to thank the House for the patience with which they have listened thus far to what, I fear, has been a dull exposition of a very complicated subject. What I would say with regard to the redemption scheme is this: I think I have amply shown that the law with regard to redemption does require amendment, and we have made proposals which, in our judgment, will be fair to both the parties concerned, and which shall also secure that the tithes shall not be frittered away. I do not suppose for a moment that our redemption scheme is perfect or incapable of amendment, and we shall receive suggestions for amendment, from whatever quarter they may come, with perfectly open minds, provided only those suggestions are just to the interests of both the parties concerned and to the interests of the public. I doubt whether it is possible, on any subject which excites so much interest as this, to propose a Bill which shall meet with universal approbation; I am quite sure it is impossible to do so on the tithe question; but this, at any rate, I may say, I make no objection whatever to the opposition with which this Bill has been met. I do not care for the opposition of those who oppose the Bill because they want to make the payment of tithe as difficult as possible, in order to injure the Church, or of those who think that they find in this tithe question a useful lever, as it has been called, for upsetting the Establishment, and wish that that lever should be kept in the hands of the people. Nor of those who are the foes to all property, and are trying to delude some unwary landowners into believing that the foundations of one kind of property

Sir Michael Hicks Beach.

can be weakened without injuring those of all other kinds of property. When I come to the criticism offered by tithe owners on one side and tithepayers on the other, I am very much disposed to set one against the other. When I am told by the Tithepayers' Association that this Bill is entirely in the interests of the tithe owner, I turn, on the other hand, to a letter which I read the other day from an indignant tithe owner, in which he described the Bill as an

> "Inhuman measure of simple spoliation, furnishing fresh evidence of the general decay of principle which threatens the very existence of society."

I say these criticisms may be set one against the other, and in the middle of them I find reasonable safety. I commend the Bill to the fair judgment of the House as an attempt to do justice to both sides, and to the interests of the country at large, and as a measure which, in our belief, if it should become law, will have this beneficent operation—that it will put an end to a mistaken grievance which is the main source of the strength, if not of the existence, of a lawless and dangerous agitation.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(5.28) MR. PICTON rose——

*MR. SPEAKER: In point of form, other Amendments on the Paper will take precedence of that of the hon. Member.

MR. PICTON: I thought I was first.

No other hon. Member rising,

MR. PICTON said: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman has taken a sanguine view of the safety of a middle course in a case where "Cannon to right of them, cannon to left of them, volleyed and thundered." No doubt the question is a complicated one, and last Session the leader of the House promised that it should be submitted to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses, so that it might examine and report upon the complications to which the right hon. Gentleman has alluded. That would have been a reasonable course, and it would have been especially reasonable and wise if the noble Lord, who has presided over a meeting of the Tithe Question Association, had been appointed chairman of the Committee. The right hon. gentleman has quoted something I have written, but he misunderstands my position. It is because this Bill relaxes the hold of the nation on the tithe, juggles with it, and turns into a portable form the nation's property, so that it can be easily carried off hereafter, that I, for one, strongly object to the Bill. No doubt the tithe is legally due from the tithepayer to the tithe owner, but it is likewise the property of the people of this country in general. I am anxious it should not be taken away from them, and I am anxious it should not be lessened in value. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the case of Wales. Wales will have much better exponents of her cause than I can pretend to be, and yet such is my sympathy for the Principality that I cannot help making some remarks upon the case of Wales. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the 75 parishes in the diocese of St. Asaph, where, out of £38,000 of tithe that is due, £10,000 remains unpaid, and he went on to refer to the strange kind of Christianity that passed by the sufferings of the clergy, which are brought about by this large proportion of the tithe remaining unpaid. In my opinion it is a strange kind of Christianity that leads the members of the Established Church in Wales to allow their clergy to suffer in this manner, and which seeks to throw the burden of the maintenance of the clergy of that Church upon the poor farmers of Wales. The right hon. Gentleman was quite wrong in his allusion to myself. He said I might obtain the praise of the Liberation Society for the course I am now taking. On the contrary, the hon. Member for West Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), who is a distinguished member of the Liberation Society, has expressed his strong disapproval of my action. Therefore, it is not to the Liberation Society I am looking for praise and encouragement. I look, as I hope to show presently, to the common sense and the substantial interests that are at stake. The right hon. Gentleman has also said that nothing is liable to be taken in satisfaction of the tithe-charge except what is grown upon the land, and that the new Act will carefully preserve that state of the law. I hope to show it will do nothing of the kind. Not only will the produce of any particular plot of land be liable for the tithe-charge upon it, but that of other plots held by the same farmer, as well as his furniture, will also be liable to make good any deficiency. Instead of abolishing distraint this Bill doubles the power, and extends distraint to the farmer's household goods, as well as to what is growing on the land. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that the value of land in Berkshire and Essex has very considerably diminished. So it has, and it is a great shame that in this country, which possesses the richest and largest markets in the world, the Government should have been so blind to the nation's real interest as to allow the value of land to go down as it has done. I cannot believe that this is an absolute necessity; and, indeed, the right hon. Gentleman himself looks forward to another and a better state of things, when the value of the land may be restored, and the value of tithe likewise. But he wants to sell tithe now when everything is depressed, and when a comparatively low price can be obtained for it. To that extent he will diminish the value of the nation's property. With that policy I entirely disagree. But the Government are evidently puzzled in this matter. This is the fourth Bill they have brought in on this question, and everyone has differed from the rest. This looks like uncertainty, vacillation, and weakness of purpose. The present Bill is no better than any of the others. It is simply an attempt to delude public opinion, which they dare not face. Does it conciliate public opinion on either side? We have the Resolutions of the Tithe Question Association and of the Farmers' Alliance; we have articles and letters in the *Mark Lane Express*, a paper not much inclined to Liberalism; and we have articles and letters in the paper called *Agriculture*, and all of them are bitterly opposed to the measure brought in by the right hon. Gentleman. With a good many of the articles and letters I agree, for my first objection to his measure is that it does nothing whatever for the relief of agriculture, or for the relief of the farmers working on the land. I am perfectly anxious not to be misunderstood on this point. I am aware that many crude proposals are made which assume that it would be a relief of agriculture to lessen the amount of tithe, or, in other words, to upset the settlement of 1836. I am not of that opinion at all. My method of relief would be very different to that. The Government will not face the real grievance, which is that the tithe system takes out of the land every year a very large sum of money which ought to go towards lightening the financial burdens of the people, but which is devoted to the purposes of what can no longer be considered a National Church. The right hon. Gentleman has said that the tithe is as much the property of the Church as a man's watch is the man's property.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I was referring to lay tithe.

MR. PICTON: Yes; and the right hon. Gentleman denied that tithe was in any proper sense the property of the nation, adding that it was the property of the Church. For the belief that tithe is the property of the nation we have authority. That great statesman, Lord John Russell, in bringing forward the Tithe Commutation Bill in 1836, distinctly stated that the tithe was national property, and no one, either in this House or the House of Lords, has attempted to question the accuracy of that statement. At the opening of this very Session the right hon. Gentlemen who respectively lead on each side of the Table spoke of tithe as national property. No one, as far as I know, differed from them; but I will take the words of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, that it is the property of the Church. What is the Church? Will he define the Church of England? Will the right hon. Gentleman tell the House in what respect the Church of England differs from the English nation? I am a member of the Church of England. I decline to be considered anything else. I was christened in the Church of England, and though I have not very frequently attended its services I have sometimes done so with, I hope, considerable profit. I disavow altogether that I have any desire to increase the difficulty of collecting tithes in order to injure the Established Church as a spiritual and a religious institution. But the Church of England is by law established. I defy the right hon. Gentleman to distinguish it from the English nation. I know the right hon. Gentleman may tell me, as learned professors and distinguished lawyers have done, that he himself is technically wrong in calling tithe the property of the Church, that it is the property of certain Corporations, some Corporations sole and others aggregate Corporations. He knows that is a technical description. He himself says it is the property of the Church. I maintain that tithe is the property of the English nation, considered as a Church; and that if the English nation wills that this property shall be put to other uses, it will never be deterred from acting by the reflection that it belongs to the English nation in its spiritual and not in its secular capacity, and so I do not think that the observation that it is the property of the Church will be of very much avail. Our real grievance is that large sums of money, amounting altogether to no less a sum than £4,000,000 sterling, are taken out of the land year by year and handed over to the Church, which ought to be applied towards lightening the financial burdens of the community. I may be told that this is not the light in which the Tithe Question Association and the Farmers' Alliance regard the matter. But I am not so sure of that. At any rate, I think they are very rapidly coming to that way of thinking, and, if anything will drive them to it, it is certainly the Bill now before the House. They want teaching; they want to understand that if their burdens are to be lightened it can only be done by diverting the nation's property to do the nation's work. The money might be spent in the provision of additional schools, or in the establishment of Agricultural Colleges, which are very much wanted, or in promoting higher education of every kind. I am persuaded that if the people once learn that such application of the property of the nation would lessen their burdens and tend to increase their profits, we should very soon have them on our side in dealing with the relief that is to be given to the occupying tenants and those who toil on the land. The right hon. Gentleman said the Bill will prevent distress, and he based his assertion on the presence of the 1st clause. But under the 6th clause tithe is to be regarded as rent. How do people recover rent? Is it not usually by the process of distress? Would not the same power of distress apply to this tithe rent-charge, which is turned into rent? Suppose a farmer pays £50 rent and £50 tithe. At present, tithe cannot be recovered from him except by distraining on the crops growing on the land; but by the 6th clause the £50 will be turned into so much additional rent. He will owe it to his landlord, who, if it is not paid, may proceed by way of distress upon everything the man has got. Therefore, instead of abolishing distress, the Bill makes distress more acute, painful, and dangerous. Besides that, at present the farmer may only be distrained upon by one person, the owner of the tithe; but if this Bill passes he may be distrained upon by either of two, by the tithe owner or the receiver appointed by the County Court. The "receiver" includes the manager, and he will have power, if he thinks proper, to take the farm out of the hands of the farmer. Therefore, I contend there are two parties who may distrain, not only upon the produce growing out of the ground, but upon everything in the stables and houses. I wonder at the boldness of any Government coming forward and saying that a Bill like this is any relief. Again, it is provided that application may be made to the Assessment Committee in order to obtain a special assessment. Just, in passing, let me ask the House if this is not tampering with the nation's property? You are to have the value of the tithe lowered in this insidious manner, and yet nothing would induce the right hon. Gentleman to disturb the settlement of 1836. It can be disturbed all over the country by the Assessment Committee. I have here a list of 18 farms, the letting value of each of which has gone down, in 20 or 30 years, by more than half, and, in some cases, by more than two-thirds, and even more than five-sixths. The tithe, of course, remains the same. I find a case of a farm, which formerly was rented at £1,600, with tithe amounting to £400. The landlord has agreed to let it for £650, the landlord himself paying the tithe. If the landlord goes to the Assessment Committee and obtains a reduction, into whose pocket will the profit go? It will go into the pocket of the landlord. And so landlords get as much as ever they can screw out of the tenants. If the landlords do not get more now, it is only because they cannot. If the special assessments are reduced, landlords who are accustomed to get as much as they fairly can will, of course, get the benefit of the lowered assessment. I hold that the clause providing for appeal to the Assessment Committee will almost invariably operate—and always in times of prosperity—in favour of the landlord, and not of the occupying farmer. Then, says the right hon. Gentleman, there is this magnificent project of redemption. In the Land Commissioners' Report for 1888 I find that an annual amount of tithe, reaching £17,500, has been redeemed for £443,000. What I should like to know is whether on those farms where the tithe has been redeemed the farmers get their land at lower rates? Do they not pay the interest on the money that was expended in the redemption of the tithes? Does the landlord hand over the interest on the money to the tenant? Certainly not, if he can avoid it. Whether the tithe is redeemed or not, the occupier is called upon to pay as much as the land will produce. But when it is said the landlords are made liable, I quite agree in the desirability of that. I think they ought to be more liable than they are now; but, as I have shown, the tenant is liable to the owner. You make matters worse for the farmer by giving the owner a firmer grip of him than he had before. It will be easier for the owner to get at the tenant, and he can do it at less expense. The Amendments which were proposed to the Bill of last year were much better than anything to be found in the present Bill. There the County Court was made a sort of Court of arbitration. That proposal was strongly supported by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) who, I am afraid, frightened the Government by the way in which he praised it; the result being that the clause has disappeared. Short of such interference as was then projected between the landlord and the tenant there is no hope of helping the farmer at all, except by the devotion of the tithe to the lightening of the burdens of the people. I maintain that that is the proper purpose of the tithe. From time immemorial one-tenth has been stopped out of the produce of the land. For whom is it stopped? I know some people will say, "It is stopped for the glory of God." I know no better way of glorifying God than in serving our fellow-creatures. No one would be so blasphemous as to suppose that the tithe can be of any use to the Almighty. The tithe was given for the purpose of doing good to our fellow-creatures. It was, of course, devoted to certain ornate church services; but, in addition, it was devoted to alms-giving, and to the help and relief of the sick. Why, Sir, the monasteries of old times, though they were associated, especially towards their latter end, with many abuses, were amongst the most beautiful our history can show. They were formed of men professedly, at least, and often really, associated together as brethren for the glory of God through service to mankind. All the tenants of the estate regarded the good brethren as indeed their brothers and their helpers. In all times of application the people went to them for help; in all times of perplexity they appealed to them for advice and were never refused. The monasteries were, at any rate for a long time, a source of beneficence in their neighbourhoods; and not merely of spiritual, but of secular service as well. Well, Sir, I say that the tithes which, in former days, were devoted to the use of the monasteries ought now to be devoted to the good works which the monasteries performed as far as those works are consistent with our times. The misuse of tithe in its devotion to a Church which is no longer national is bitterly felt in the Principality of Wales. Those spiritual wants which the mediæval Church supplied in its own way our fellow-countrymen in Wales meet by voluntary contributions. They build their own temples of worship, they support their own ministers, and the enormous majority of the people of Wales never trouble the so-called National Church for any service whatever. Whatever the Representatives of English constituencies do, I earnestly hope the Representatives of Wales will fight this Bill to the death, and never be content with anything but the restoration to the people of what is their right. The Welsh people have been far too patient, so patient that they have been looked upon as poor-spirited. I believe that if they had gone the right way about it, the way they have been taught by the Irish Members, they would have had the so-called National Church in

Wales disestablished and disendowed a generation ago. Whatever Members may think, the fact is that the feeling in the Principality is becoming beyond endurance. The steam has got up so high that there may be an explosion any time, unless something is done to meet the discontent. Now, Sir, who will have to value the tithe? The Board of Agriculture is to have a great deal to do with it. What is the Board of Agriculture? It is represented in this House by a highly respected gentleman who professes to understand all about rural life, and who is a great authority on sport. But I presume the Board is composed of representatives of the land-owning interest, and I suppose they will see that the price at which tithe may be redeemed is brought down as low as possible. The Bishops are to have a voice in the matter; but I do not think they will avail against the worldly-minded astuteness of the members of the Board of Agriculture. The Board is a very dangerous Body indeed to deal with this national inheritance. Now, to whom is the inheritance to be made over? To the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Who are the Ecclesiastical Commissioners? They consist of two Archbishops, 31 Bishops, three Deans, and 21 laymen. The fact is, that the Commissioners are not a national Board, but simply trustees for a religious denomination. They are a Church Company Limited, and to this company Parliament is asked to make over the enormous capital that may be realised by the sale of tithes. Putting it at a very low estimate, tithes ought to realise a capital of between £60,000,000 and £70,000,000 sterling. It may be said that the transaction is too big to be effected, and that the probability is that the sales will never be carried out. Why bring in the Bill at all if that be so? I must assume that the Bill will be carried out. Just think of the difference between our condition and that of our children if we allow such a Bill as this to be carried out. We have a revenue of about £3,300,000 secured as a first charge on the national land. Our descendants, if this transaction is carried out, will possess some 60 millions in a very portable form, which can be easily carried off. Now, do not let me be misunderstood. Of course, I am insinuating nothing whatever against the perfect honour and high integrity of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; but, after all, what is the duty of a denominational trustee? It is to do the best he can for his denomination, and in the event of disendowment if the Ecclesiastical Commissioners find themselves with 60 millions of Government and other securities in hand, they will, no doubt, feel it to be their duty as denominational trustees to do their best for the Anglican Church. Therefore, I strongly object to making over this property to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who are entirely unfitted by their position to be entrusted with such a duty. I observe that the Farmers' Alliance, on March 10, passed a Resolution to the effect—

> "That no measure dealing with tithe will be satisfactory which does not demand that the redemption price be handed to the County Councils."

["Oh."] That shows that, in the opinion of the Farmers' Alliance, the County Council is certainly a more trustworthy and desirable Body to deal with the matter than the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. It is said that the land of poor old England is worn out, and only fit for sport. Well, the fact is, the land of this country is no longer the poor man's farm, but the rich man's sporting ground, and until that is altered the land will never be worth more. But if this country has only 10 years of thorough-going Radical Government—not merely Liberal, but pure and unadulterated Radical Government—the value of the land here will be increased at the very least 50 per cent.; and while the tenants will be better off, the landlords may have reason to bless their stars they have had the Radicals in office; but the makeshift scheme before the House will only hinder such a blessed time, and retard the reform which is absolutely necessary. For these reasons, I move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Picton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*(6.14.) MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorganshire, Mid): In rising to address the House for the first time I desire to appeal for that indulgence which the House, in its generosity, always extends to new Members. I should not have ventured to address the House for the first time on a vexed and complicated question like this, except for one reason, and that is the intense interest my constituency, in common with all the other constituencies in Wales, take in the matter. I think it is very evident, from the speech of the President of the Board of Trade, that this Bill like the Bill of last Session, is brought forward simply and solely on account of something that has happened in Wales. The right hon. Gentleman began his speech by saying that there was urgent necessity for an amendment of the law. I do not know where that necessity has arisen unless it be in the Principality. At the conclusion of his speech the right hon. Gentleman said he thought the Bill should pass, so as to put an end to a mistaken grievance and a dangerous agitation. From this again, it is very evident that the part of the country the Government have in view in proposing this measure is the Principality of Wales; and touching upon something that has fallen from the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton), if I may be allowed to speak on behalf of my Colleagues in the representation of Wales, I will say that it is our intention to do our utmost to defeat this Bill, both upon Second Reading, and also in Committee. I go further, and say that, as Welsh Members, we expect the English Liberals and Radicals to help us, and if we are not so assisted, Wales will have something to say about it. Of course, the Irish Members will assist us, I know. Now, the Welsh people take a very broad view of this matter. They regard tithe as national property, and, holding that view, they are naturally very dissatisfied with the narrowly conceived measure which is now before the House. We are supported in our contention by such an authority as the leader of the House, because in the recent debate on the Address the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "The right hon. Gentleman (the Member for Mid Lothian) referred, in terms which I desire to re-echo, to the question of tithe. He said that tithe ought to be respected and preserved as national property. I re-echo that sentiment, and it will be the effort of Her Majesty's Government to present a Bill to that effect."

I do not know whether this measure appeals to the House as one which is going to preserve tithe as national property or not, but to us it does not so appeal. If it is national property, what does the measure do with regard to it? I have said it is narrowly conceived. I use the words advisedly, and I may say I was much amused in reading the debate on the Bill of last Session, to find observations made by a late Tory Member of this House, in which he compared the Bill then before the House to a little mouse. He added that the mouse was "a little animal deserving at the present time of very great care indeed, so that it might be brought to maturity"—I suppose this Bill is the maturity of the mouse of last Session—"so as to make it a useful animal not only in England but in Wales." I admit that this Bill is a little more extended in its dimensions—it might be compared to a rat, but whether it is a rat or a mouse, it is equally objectionable. What does the Bill do? It merely touches the fringe of a very large question, and I think, with all deference to the President of the Board of Trade, it does reopen the settlement made in 1836, when the Tithe Commutation Act was passed. We hear a great deal about needy clergy, and about tithe owners having lost a large part of their property. We have not had the fact stated that since 1836, whereas the value of tithe has been below par for 22 years, it has been above par for 31 years. If the settlement is going to be opened at all it ought to be opened from the point of view of all the parties to the settlement. But this Bill is a Bill to help one party alone, and that party, of course, is the clergy of the Church of England. There is a little given to the landlord, but I think we are correct in saying broadly that the object of the Bill is to give relief to one class, and one class alone, and upon that ground it is a piece of class legislation, which this House ought not to pass. The measure is divisible into three parts. First, there is the remedy proposed for the recovery of tithe, and, again, we have the aid of the County Courts, though not in the same way as was suggested last year. The remedy given is not, as was proposed last year, by suing the tenant, but by making the owner liable, and enabling the County Court to appoint a receiver of the rents and profits of the land. The hon. Member for Leicester has pointed out that whereas the 1st clause in the Bill pretends to abolish the remedy by distress for the recovery of tithe rent-charge, other portions of the Bill heap distress upon distress. If the 3rd clause is passed in its present shape, it will not only be possible to distrain for the tithe, but for the costs, which may amount to 50, 60, or 70 per cent. Then the 6th clause of the Bill, as it stands, will also allow distress; therefore, the grievance as to distress is not done away with at all. There is another grievance which will be inflicted if the Bill passes, and that is that the receiver may also be made manager of the farm. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I have read the Bill, and I think if hon. Gentlemen will read it they will say "Yes, yes." As to the remedy, I will merely add that in Wales we have heard a good deal about Church and State; it seems to me that if the Bill passes in its present form the phrase will be changed into Church and County Court. The second part of the Bill relates to the special rateable value. Under the Bill of last year, the tenant was to pay the tithe, and the tithe owner might more easily recover by suing him. There was to be no relief for the tenant. But this year, when the Government proposes to change the liability for tithe from the tenant to the landlord, the landlord is to have relief. As to the Assessment Committee, I hope that if the Bill gets into Committee the Government will be able to place the decision of the rateable value in the hands, not of the Assessment Committee (a body which does not command confidence, except that of the parsons and landlords), but in the hands of the County Councils. The third part of the Bill is that which deals with the redemption of tithe, and, so far as I can see, it does not commend itself to any portion of the community. We were told by the President of the Board of Trade that he did not propose to discuss the present appropriation of tithe. It is evident to the House already that the discussion has gone into that groove, and in that groove it will remain. But the Bill itself does have regard to the appropriation of tithe, because it says that if tithe rent charge is redeemed the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are to use the redemption value of the tithe for the permanent benefit of the benefice, that is, to establish for ever the present appropriation. It cannot be expected that the people of Wales, who are a nation of Nonconformists, are satisfied with the present application and appropriation of tithe. They might be more satisfied with it if, as in the olden days, a third of the tithe went towards the assistance of the poor. But from the days of that great spoliator—as he was called by the right hon. Baronet—Henry the Eighth, tithe has gone almost altogether into the Church channel. In Glamorganshire £40 a year only goes out of tithe to a charity instead of a third of the whole, as in the days gone by. Let me also draw attention to the fact that out of the County of Glamorgan, £3,000 a year is taken in tithes by the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester. How can it be expected that the people of Wales, of poor little Wales, as the Principality is sometimes called, can be satisfied with such an appropriation of tithe by the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral. I venture to hope that the Government, for their own sake, will do with this Bill as they did with their Tithe Bill last Session, that is, withdraw it. I am satisfied that it would be to the interest of the clergy themselves if the Bill were withdrawn. What ought to be done with tithes in Wales is to re-adjust them, and to nationalise them. We have heard of the grievances of farmers in England, but, strange to say, we find no relief in the Bill for them; the proposals are made in the interest of the starving clergy. Well, I hope the Church is not in such a degraded state as to allow its clergy to starve. I am afraid the Government take their views of Wales too much from the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General. An estimable man and an able administrator he no doubt is, but of Wales he knows next to nothing. I say it advisedly and without offence; more is required than a summer residence in the Principality to understand the views and aspirations of the Welsh people. If, after all, your clergy are starving what a commentary is that upon the conduct of Churchmen. They have had their churches built, and their parsonages and their rectories provided, and yet the rich people of Wales, landlords and merchants, allow their clergy to starve! Nonconformists have not only erected their own chapels but maintain their own ministers, and you hear nothing of their ministers being in distress. If the Government would only look the matter really in the face the decision to which they would come would be this: that the voluntary system which has succeeded in Wales in regard to Nonconformists, would also succeed in regard to the Church. We have no quarrel with the Church in Wales. We do not want to injure the Church; we want to get rid of the Establishment, not of the Church. If the adherents of the Church were to rely upon the voluntary system, and upon the liberality of its own supporters, I am sure we should hear the last of a starving Welsh clergy. I thank hon. Members for the attention with which they have listened to me on this my first time of addressing the House.

*(6.35.) MR. GEDGE (Stockport): I do not pretend to follow the hon. Member for Leicester through his very discursive speech, in which the whole civil and ecclesiastical history of the country was touched upon, more or less, but I feel indebted to him for putting at the close of his observations his objections to the Bill under four heads. To these I will endeavour to make a reply. The first great grievance is this: that the Government do not, as he says, face the real problem before them, that being, in his view, the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the National Church. The hon. Member who spoke last, and whom, though I am not an old Member of the House, I may congratulate upon the clearness and force of his first address, that hon. Member states, following the hon. Member for Leicester, that he has no wish to injure the Church; he only wishes to Disestablish it. Well, whether he would consider it an injury to himself to be deprived of his income, or even of his pocket-money, we can easily guess. For it is not a question of Disestablishment; they care very little for that, the real question is Disendowment, not Disestablishment. The hon. Member who wishes the Church disestablished would also have it disendowed, and that he calls doing it no injury! All I can say is that if any religious body can get on without any income, and finds no difficulty in raising funds to carry on its spiritual work that is a very fortunate body. I do not believe any body, especially such a body as the Church of England, which carries on its work so well—with some faults, no doubt—can, without great injury to its philanthropic and religious work, be deprived of the income which the piety of our fathers provided for some of our Ministers, for it is only a part who are thus paid, and the large majority are not at all well paid. It seems to me that when the hon. Member quotes Scripture to justify himself in the policy he recommends, I may remind him of another passage of Holy Writ where the refusal of tithe is called a robbery of God. If it was described as a robbery of God in God's own inspired language to take the tithe from the Church then, it is clearly a robbery of God now. If it was possible to rob God then it is possible to rob Him now. The hon. Member for Leicester is a believer in Scripture, as I am, and I ask him how does he show that what was robbery of God then is not robbery of God now? But, of course, we are not here to listen to lectures on behalf of the Liberation Society. We have had one, but I will not go into that matter. We are told the tithe is national property, and in some sense it is; it is Trust property, and, like other Trust property, and, indeed, like all property, it is in the power of the State to interfere if it is used in a manner detrimental to the State. Our lives and property belong to the State, in the sense that we may be deprived of either in the interest of the State. But I deny that tithe is national property except in one sense, except in the sense that every person may call himself a member of the Church. It is true any person in the country has a right to go into the Church, and to require the services of the Church ministers, and on these grounds it is perfectly fair that this national property should be devoted to the maintenance of the Church, because the whole nation is entitled to the services of the Church. Whatever may be going to happen at a future date, at all events at the present

time the enormous majority of the people of England and Wales are in favour of maintaining the establishment and endowment of the National Church. When the majority is on the other side then you can do what you like, but even then I would submit to hon. Members that to disestablish and disendow a historic Church, which has existed for 1,600 years, and whose resources have been largely supplemented by contributions from its members within the last century—perhaps more was given to the Church in the last century than in all the preceding centuries—I say it is a very serious and a tremendous undertaking to disestablish and disendow such a Church. I do not remember the exact words, but I remember the force of an expression used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian not many years ago, when he stated that to separate Church and State would be tearing from the State its main part, leaving a scarcely recognisable mass. But we are not to come to the Disestablishment of the Church with a light heart upon the Second Reading of a Tithes Bill. Are hon. Members prepared to take up the position that nothing should be done to alleviate any grievance found in the actual working of things in the Church of England because they think it ought to be put an end to, or, at all events, ought to be disestablished and disendowed? Are they going to say that because they wish for a tremendous change, they will not deal with this grievance in relation to the collection of tithes? That is like the practice of the peace-at-any-price party, which refuses to go to war on any occasion whatever. I hope we shall not follow such a policy, but, as practical men, look at the existing state of things, find out where the shoes pinch, and, if we can, make them easier without regard to a tremendous change which may possibly come at some future time. The Bill, says the hon. Member for Leicester, does no good to the farmers. Well, many tenant farmers have very little to do with tithe payments at all, and they never have except by their own contracts, and where this is the case, the Bill leaves them pretty much in the same position as they are at present. But the existing law does interfere with farmers very prejudicially, and in a manner that has caused a great deal of the present trouble; and on this point it is the Bill proposes relief. The hon. Member says distress is professed to be taken away, but that it is not; it is made worse. But let us look at the matter. The tithe is supposed to issue from the land, and to be charged on the produce of the land. Every landlord, with a few exceptions, has bought or inherited his land subject to this charge, and, as a matter of convenience, landlords have frequently arranged with tenants to pay it, and instead of receiving a higher rent, including the rent-charge, the landlord receives a lower rent, leaving the tenant to pay the tithe rent-charge. And they have done this on this principle, that tithe goes up and down, in accordance with prices of commodities produced, and so when prices go up it is fair the tenant who produces them should pay rather more, and less again when prices are low. This arrangement has been found mutually convenient. But under the Act of 1836, though the land and its produce are ultimately liable, the tithe owner is not allowed to enforce payment from the landowner until he has first levied a distress on the crops of the tenant farmer, even though he pays a full rent and the landlord may have covenanted to pay the tithe rent-charge himself. Now, that grievance this Bill removes, and the tenant farmer will have a guarantee that his crops will not be distrained upon except he has himself brought himself under that obligation. Where is the hardship? If a man covenants with his landlord that he will make the payment, and if his rent is proportionately less, what hardship can there be? We are not living in Ireland; we are not under a Home Rule Parliament to upset all land agreements; we are living in England or Wales where the law requires all covenants shall be performed. I give it as the result of my legal experience that if a man has entered into a covenant, and has brought himself under liability, the simpler and speedier you make the process of recovery to compel payment the more merciful it is to him. You do not help the debtor by forcing the creditor to go a roundabout and costly process to compel payment, for the cost of this must ultimately fall upon the debtor; the truest kindness is to make the process of recovery sure, simple, speedy, and inexpensive. Therefore, to the extent to which the farmer owes this tithe rent-charge, to that extent it is a boon to him to have the means of recovery as easy as possible. Then there is an objection—it was not urged by the hon. Member for Leicester, but I have read it in a newspaper as an objection, the Bill affords no relief to the tithepayer or to the landlord. But why should there be a relief? If A owes to B and B has to pay, how can A or B get relief, except the one from the other? Both owner and payer, it is said, speak evil of the Bill, and how then can it find approval when it is cannonaded from both sides? But suppose the right hon. Gentlemen had brought in a Bill of which alone the landowner spoke well would not that Bill be open to still stronger condemnation from the tithepayer? The fact is, to use the old simile, you cannot get more than two pints out of a quart pot. If you have a tithe rent-charge payable to the person entitled to it, you cannot give relief except out of the pockets of the one or the other, unless the State intervenes with its credit, as has been proposed in the Irish Land Purchase Bill. Another complaint of the hon. Member for Leicester is that the value of this national property will be diminished by the new process of recovery, that the tithe rent-charge being national property, and put into a more portable form, may more easily be run away with. Let us bring this to a practical test. He was anxious to, what I should call, confiscate this national property, to take it away from those to whom it now belongs for certain purposes and give it to others. Which is easier, to confiscate it when put in a portable form under Trustees and under the control of Government, or when derived from land all over the country? The argument of the hon. Member reminds me of the Roman Emperor who wished that all his people had one neck that might be dealt with by one blow. Those who desire to confiscate should hail this Bill for bringing the property together in a portable form, that the hon. Member and his friends may, if they have the opportunity, walk away with it. He tells us the value will be depreciated because people will redeem the tithe rent-charge, when agriculture is depressed, and he indulges in a prophecy, which I am sure we shall be all grateful to have fulfilled, of an end to agricultural depression and a rise in the value of land of 50 per cent. True, the price we shall have to pay will be 10 years of Radical rule, and I dare say in the next quarter of a century he and his friends may have that period of power—I hope not longer—and if I live to see the result I shall be quite ready to congratulate them on management which has brought about higher rents for the landowners, better profits for the tenants, better wages for labourers, with corn remaining at a low price. But I venture to remind the hon. Member that except in cases where the commuted value of the tithe rent-charge does not exceed 20s. redemption can only take place by agreement between tithe owner and tithepayer, and is it consonant with reason, with even selfish reasons, that the tithe owner will consent to redeem at a period when values are low, and, even if, from personal motives, he does that, does the hon. Member suppose for a moment that the Bishops, whose intervention he scoffs at, are likely to consent to such a redemption? Until prices have risen to a normal condition it is not likely the tithe owner will consent to redeem, and I think the hon. Member need not fear for the national property being taken away because there is the advantage of it being more easily recovered. Better to recover £95 easily than £100 with great difficulty. The hon. Member's last objection is to increasing the power of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. But he should see, if he reads the Bill carefully, that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have, in the sense he means, no power whatever. He objects to the devotion of the fund to Church purposes, but it is by law the Commissioners will be compelled to devote the funds to that purpose, and, whether the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, or the County Council, as he would wish, act as Trustees, they would equally be compelled to comply with the conditions of the law, but as the Commissioners have the administration of other funds for like purposes it is but natural that they should include this duty as Trustees among others. As to the redemption to be paid for tithe in the possession of laymen, I see no such necessity, and I hope in Committee an Amendment may be introduced by which the Commissioners may not have the disposition of money with which they have nothing to do.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: They will not.

*MR. GEDGE: I am glad to have that assurance. The hon. Member for Leicester is under an entire misconception as to the duties of the Receiver as to whom he expresses so much dread. He will be a Receiver for the landlord, not for the tenant, and the power to appoint a Receiver is found in every well-drawn mortgage, and, indeed, the recent Conveyancing Acts give the power without the clause. The Receiver will in no way interfere with the tenant's management of his farm; he takes the position of landlord and receives the rent from the tenant. There are defects in the Bill which I hope may be amended in Committee, as, for instance, the special assessment clause. By this clause if the rateable value of the land be less than the tithe rent-charge, then the tithe rent-charge is to be reduced to that rateable value, and that is a boon to which I am not sure the landlords are entitled. Under the Act of 1836 the landowner and tithe owner could, by agreement, exempt certain land in a parish from tithe rent-charge on condition that the charge should be transferred to other land in the same parish. Thus, supposing an owner has 1,000 acres, he could make 600 acres free, and transfer the whole charge to the remaining 400, providing that the latter was three times—not 10 times—the value of the tithe charge. Therefore, it does seem to me that on the principle that you cannot eat your cake and have it too, this special assessment clause confers on all landlords an advantage they cannot claim in such cases. But I very cordially support the Second Reading of the Bill, leaving what I consider defects to be dealt with in Committee.

*(7.0.) MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): As perhaps was inevitable from the course of events, the Bill undoubtedly, from our point of view, shows a certain advance on the measure introduced last year. The Government have been taught by the sad experience of last year to avoid certain pitfalls, and, no doubt, at first blush, it would seem there is a transfer of burden from tenant to landlord. The more closely the Bill is looked into, the less, I think, will it be liked. We find that the measure contains certain clauses relating to redemption. That, no doubt, is a very praiseworthy object; but when matters come to be closely examined, we discover the probability that these clauses, in the case of certain lands—in Berkshire for instance—would produce the result that the tithe might possibly be redeemed at three or four years' purchase, and then this property, in which, as the President of the Board of Trade once said the nation has a reversionary interest, would be largely frittered away. Another, and perhaps the most important proposal contained in the Bill, is that the payment of tithe shall in future be made by the landlord and not by the tenant. That was obviously the intention of the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836, and no doubt that is in itself a praiseworthy aim; but when one examines the method by which the tithe may be recovered under this Bill, it is seen at once that the tenant farmer is not in reality placed in a position of greater advantage than he previously occupied, because, instead of there being only one process by which the amount of the tithe can be recovered from him as now, he may be subjected to at least two processes. The first of these is that of distraint, which, under the Bill, will still be retained; the second is the new process instituted by this measure—a process of recovery through the mechanism of the County Court agency, by a Receiver who is also to be manager of the farm. The result of these proposals will be to make the tithe more valuable to the tithe owner by increasing the security, while it will at the same time make the tenant farmer's position more difficult. Take, for instance, the case of a tenant farmer who now pays his tithe in the shape of increased rent. Suppose that the landowner becomes suddenly insolvent after the tenant has paid his rent, but before he (the landowner) pays the tithe to the person who is entitled to receive it. What would be the result? After three months the process of recovery in the County Court will be resorted to; and as I understand the Bill, it is possible that the tenant may be compelled to pay the tithe twice over—after having once paid

it in the form of increased rent, the Receiver appointed by the County Court might come down upon the produce of the land, and upon the stock of the farm and secure the tithe for the tithe owner——

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: Oh, no.

*MR. F. S. STEVENSON: Well, I hope that this point will be made quite clear later on in the debate. All I can say is that, at the first blush, it seems to me that the Bill exposes the tenant to this serious loss. There is one point of view from which it has been suggested this measure may be likely to prove a gain to the tenant. When the tenant leaves a farm at the present time, he must, to some extent, leave behind him an amount of sunk capital, in spite of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and that amount of sunk capital acts as a lever in the hands of the landlord, by which he is able to extort certain terms from the tenant. Therefore, the transference of the payment of tithe from the tenant to the landowner appears in some slight degree—although possibly in an infinitesimal degree—to operate in favour of the tenant. Still, the burden of proof of this remains on the side of those who favour this measure. There is, however, a class which the Act is not likely to benefit. There are a considerable number of freeholders in Lincolnshire, Wiltshire, and other parts of the country, and how, I should like to know, will they be benefited by the provisions of the Bill? The measure increases the security of the owner, and it gives him additional methods of recovering tithe, but no benefit of any kind can accrue to the tithe-paying, land-owning, cultivator. That class is not so numerous as it ought to be, and as I should wish to see it; but still it is a very considerable class, and I must say that this measure will have the inevitable effect of placing additional difficulties in the way of increased proportion of the population of this country becoming land-owning cultivators. I do trust that if this Bill is read a second time these provisions will be carefully examined in the interests of the class to whom I am alluding, and that amendments in their favour will be introduced in Committee. There are other provisions contained in this Bill which will have to be closely scrutinised; for instance, those provisions which professed to give relief to the land in certain exceptional cases where the value of the tithe exceeds the rateable value. I do not see how the Act will benefit those cases in which the tithe comes up to the amount of the rent, or how, in other cases, it will prevent the tithe continuing to swallow up both rent and profits. It has been pointed out by one hon. Member for Wales that had it not been for the grievances in Wales this Bill would never have been brought forward. Though the grievance was very sore in Wales, this measure will not affect Wales most as far as the actual monetary value of the tithes is concerned. The evil is felt in this country to an even greater extent than in Wales. Let us take the Counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Kent. Those four counties, including the amount of tithe payable to clerical appropriators, parochial incumbents, and lay impropriators, and to schools and colleges, between them pay one-fourth of the tithes of all England and Wales put together. In all England and Wales the tithes amount to about four millions. Those four counties pay a quarter—that is, about £993,000. That, of course, shows that the four counties named are very largely interested in the question. How will this measure affect them? There is one portion of the Redemption Clauses by which I think they will be very much affected in the long run, and that is the provision by which the sum of money obtained by redemption is to be handed over to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. It is true the Commissioners are to be bound to pay the interest where the sum obtainable from the tithe is expended now, but what guarantee have we that sooner or later a move will not be made for expending that money obtained out of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Kent, in other places than those in which the money is expended now. Whether or not the tithe is national property, it seems to me that the money should not be expended in other parts of the country, but only within the limits where it is now raised. That is, I think, altogether in accordance with the requirements of justice and the needs of the case. If you hand over all the money obtained through the medium of redemption to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, you cease to have any guarantee whatever that that money will not be expended elsewhere.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: The price of redemption in each case must be placed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to the separate account of the particular benefice to which it relates.

*MR. STEVENSON: If I remember right the interest is to be paid for ever to the particular benefices upon which that money is now expended. I think, however, that most hon. Members will be of opinion that the words "for ever" in an Act of Parliament must be taken with a certain grain of salt. Those words "for ever" occurred in 1782, when the Act calling Grattan's Parliament into existence was passed. The words, however, did not mean more than 18 years. What guarantee is there that these words mean very much more in the present instance? There are many counties in which hardly any tithe is paid, and, consequently, very little expended. In the County of Westmoreland the tithe rent-charge of all kinds only amounts to £7,500 a year. It would be obviously unfair that money should be taken, as might ultimately be the case, from the four counties I have previously referred to, and expended in other parts of England. Other considerations have to be met before we can support in full a measure of this kind. It is very desirable to know why the Government have not been able to deal with that wider question of the Corn Averages. I failed to gather from the statement of the President of the Board of Trade any conclusive reason why the House is not to be called upon at the same time to deal with that portion of the question. Is this great question of the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 to be opened up mainly in the interests of one of the parties to that settlement, namely, the tithe owner, and not in the interests of the tithepayer, when undoubtedly in certain portions of the country the tithepayer is rightly complaining of certain admitted grievances? A Select Committee of the House of Commons which sat upon the question of Corn Averages did not find any very conclusive reasons against adopting remedial legislation in the direction of improving the method by which these corn averages are arrived at. The grievances on this point are conclusive. There is, first of all the grievance which raises a great deal of interest amongst farmers. It is, that some 50 years ago they were in the habit of sending all their corn to market, and consequently the valuation was taken upon the whole of that corn, whereas now the worst description of corn is consumed on the farm, and it is only the better kind which is sent to market, so that it is upon the prices fetched by that better kind that the valuation is made. Would it not be posible to introduce some legislative device to deal with that portion of the question? Then, again, there is another question connected with the subject of the corn averages which excites more attention, though it is, perhaps, of less importance than the previous consideration. Corn is bought at small markets by middlemen, and then taken to larger markets and sold at a higher price; and it is upon the second rate that the valuation is taken. Then there is a third, and, perhaps, greater grievance than any other—the taking of a septennial valuation. I think it was urged before the Select Committee, and with a great deal of truth, that in 1887 the value of £100 of tithe rent-charge, calculated on the annual average, amounted to £70; whereas, calculated on the septennial average, it was £84. No doubt there are difficulties in the way of taking an annual average, but there are no difficulties in the way of taking a triennial average. If we are to re-open the settlement of 1836 at all in the interests of the tithe owner, we must, at the same time, re-open the question in such a way as to meet such requirements of the tithepayer as are in accordance with justice and the fitness of things. Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell were both of opinion that the settlement of 1836 was effected for the benefit of the agriculturalists in order to remove restrictions which had previously prevented the free and unfettered application of capital to the soil. Sir Robert Peel, when he introduced his Bill in 1835, said—

> "The object of the measure is to put an end to the discouragement of agricultural improvement and to the demand for an increased tithe in proportion to the improvement of the land."

In the same year Lord John Russell, in answer to a deputation of his constituents, who petitioned that tithe should be commuted for a money payment equal to one-tenth of the rent, said that tithe was not one-tenth of the rent, but it was a tenth of the produce. He added that he considered tithes to be an institution of a barbarous age. These, then, were the views of the men responsible for the settlement of 1836; and those views, though perhaps they are to be taken generally in connection with the legislative proceedings of that time, also have a more permanent value, because they show distinctly that in the minds of those who were responsible for that settlement, it was regarded not so much as a final settlement, but rather as a temporary settlement with a view to the then existing state of agriculture. The amending measure of 1839 shows that at that time the Act was not regarded as altogether a final settlement. These, then, are some considerations with which we might expect to be confronted in a Bill of this kind, and yet the measure contains no provisions of that kind at all. I venture to submit that even from the point of view of tithes being a national property, there is no reason why, because the nation has an ultimate reversionary interest in tithes, grievances should not be remedied. I ventured to submit to this House last year the principle that at the present time it is really the community as a whole on whom the tithes fall as a burden, and for this reason: It cannot be said the tithes fell as a burden on the landlord, because the landlord has bought his land subject to that burden. They do not to any great extent fall upon the tenant, because if the tithes were abolished to-morrow, they would be a present to the landlord. They do not fall upon the labourer, because the labour market fluctuates according to the law of supply and demand. Therefore, as the tithe does not fall as a burden upon either of these three classes, it falls as a burden on the community at large; and if the tithe is to be abolished, it will be necessary to introduce a corresponding Land Tax in its place, and to impose it for the benefit of the nation. If we acknowledge that the burden falls upon the community and the nation has an ultimate reversionary interest in the matter, it strengthens the argument very considerably for granting to Parliament that power which, I believe, it now possesses of being able to deal with the tithe in such manner as it pleases either by decreasing or increasing it. In the present case, in consequence of the enormous fall in the value of agricultural produce, there is, undoubtedly, a case in favour of remission and not in favour of any increase. For my part, I have come to the conclusion that the amount of good which may be contained in the measure is very small indeed as compared with the amount of evil, and therefore if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Leicester is pressed to a Division, I shall go into the Lobby with my hon. Friend. Of course, I do not mean to imply that I agree with all the hon. Member said; but I do adhere to the conclusion that the tithe is a burden on the community, and that the nation has an ultimate reversionary interest in it, and I submit that there is no reason why we should not deal with admitted grievances when those grievances are found to interfere with the economical resources of the country. Let the House bear in mind what occurred at the time of the French revolution. The tithes were abolished all of a sudden in France, and made a present to the landowners. In that country there is an enormous number of landowning cultivators. But the present was not a permanent one, because a few years later taxation was put on the land to a greater extent than the burden of tithe which previously existed. Does not this bear out my theory that the general community has an ultimate reversionary interest in tithe? I can only, in conclusion, again point out that this Bill does little or nothing for the benefit of the occupiers, and entirely fails to redress the grievances of landowning cultivators, yeomen farmers, and small landowners.

(7.28.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I hope that the Bill will become law, as I regard it as an honest attempt to settle this vexed question upon a fair and rational basis. The whole object of the Bill is to throw the burden of paying the tithe upon the landowner, and to excuse the tenant from that burden altogether, and therefore it may well be called a Tenants' Relief Bill. At the present time, as hon. Gentlemen must know, a tenant invariably prefers to take his farm tithe free, and he makes his own terms with his landlord. I believe that the majority of new leases provide for the taking of the farms tithe free. The hon. Member for Leicester has suggested that the reduction of the assessment will prove a boon to the landlord; but surely he knows that the occupier invariably pays the rates, so that he will be the gainer by the reduction of the assessments. Stress has been laid on the proposal enabling the County Court Judge to appoint a manager of the farm in default of tithe payment; but this is, after all, merely a legal expression. The agent appointed will not manage the farm; he will only be the receiver of the rent under the process. The landowner has certain charges on his land which he is bound to pay; and whatever may be done between two people, one of whom receives and the other pays rent, you cannot benefit one without injuring the other. The hon. Member for Leicester would rather like to injure the landowner in some way; while the hon. Member who seconded the Amendment equally dislikes the Church. This Bill brings the two parties into direct communication by means of the Redemption Clause, and, I believe, with benefit to both. Now, the value of the tithes, roughly speaking, is £4,000,000 a year; and of this the parochial incumbents and clerical appropriators receive £3,000,000, while the remainder is devoted to colleges and schools and lay impropriators. I know that in Wales it is considered a very bad principle that the Church should receive anything at all. But we must remember that this property belongs to the Church, just as private property belongs to the individual. A good deal of friction between the incumbents and the parishioners will be done away with by this Bill. I know that the opponents of the Church dislike this, especially in Wales. In the *South Wales Daily News*, on August 15th, 1889, appeared the following:—

> "Plain speaking is best, and we may plainly say that tithe is a useful lever for upsetting the Establishment, and the people must keep hold of that lever."

Therefore, it is quite apparent that in Wales the tithe is to be used as a lever for disestablishing the Church. It is said in the Bill that tithe of the value of 20s. is to be compulsorily redeemed. I should be very glad to see that increased to £5. I think there are a number of small freeholders on whom tithe is a burden they would be glad to get rid of, and I hope that this portion of the Bill will be extended to allotments. Where land is cut up into allotments, I think the tithe ought to be redeemed so that it may no longer be a burden. With regard to excess of tithe over rent and redemption, no doubt those two points are chiefly interesting to landowners. It may be a great grievance, but I think that there are very few cases in which the tithe exceeds the rateable value of the land. In future, wherever that happens, the excess is to be eliminated altogether. That is a strong point, and we must remember that the gross rent is not the rateable value of the land. The rateable value is from 10 to 12 per cent. below the gross rent. Therefore, it is a very considerable reduction in some cases. It is quite fair; and I believe that the tithe owners agree to it, and it certainly will be of immediate benefit to the tithepayer. It has been said, why not fix the redemption value? It has also been said that redemption cannot be carried out because it is an indefinite affair, and that it will be a difficult thing for the landlord and tenant to agree upon a certain price. But the difficulty in the way of a fixed redemption is that the rates vary so in different localities. In three adjoining parishes in Hampshire the rates are 2s., 3s., and 4s. 2d. in the £1 respectively, or 10, 15, and 21 per cent., so that the nett value of £100 of tithe rent-charge in those parishes would be £90, £85, and £79. It is manifestly impossible to fix any certain number of years' purchase which would be fair and equitable throughout the country. What I should like to see would be that when the tithe owner and tithepayer agree to redeem, the matter should be referred to the Board of Agriculture, or some other known valuers, to fix the price of the tithe redemption so that it could be carried out at once. If that were done, I think, in many cases redemption could be very easily carried out. With regard to reducing the septennial averages to triennial, I do not think the tithepayer would like to do that. I think they are in favour of the septennial average. Seven years ago the tithe was at

£100; it is now £78; next year it will be about £75, at which I believe it will remain for some time. If corn went up in price suddenly next year and the following years, we should have higher tithes under a triennial system, but under this septennial average we must have it low for several years. Every £100 of tithe rent-charge is at present worth £78 under the septennial averages, and you must take off another £20 at least for rates, &c., before the tithe owner touches his money. In any redemption scheme all that would have to be calculated, and you would also have to consider the increased rates which would fall upon the landowner in lieu of the rates which were formerly paid by the tithe. It has been calculated, taking the whole of the agricultural land in England and Wales, that these increased rates would come to about 2d. in the £1. All this must be carefully considered, and, therefore, it is the more necessary when the two parties agree to redeem that the price should be fixed by some Body like the Board of Agriculture. I am sorry that the Government have not guaranteed the money for redemption at a lower rate. I think the case might have been met by means of a Government guarantee, such as that proposed for Ireland. By such a scheme, I think, both the tithe owner and the tithepayer would benefit, because the one would be eager to redeem and the other would be only too glad to get his money. If the interest were reduced from 4 per cent. to 3½ per cent., or something like that, it would be a great boon to the tithepayer. For myself, although I am only a poor landowner, an agriculturist I may say, I should be very sorry to be relieved of any of my burdens, or enriched in any way at the expense of the Church. I hope there are very few gentlemen in the whole of England who would be willing to enrich themselves, or seek relief from any of their burdens, at the cost of the Church. I do hope this Bill will be read a second time and become law, and so bring this question to a final settlement.

*(7.43.) MR. STUART RENDEL (Montgomeryshire): Sir, I think it must be clear after the very forcible maiden speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Glamorgan, that this Bill is in truth a Welsh Bill, though it has no support from Wales whatever. Wales is already beginning to speak about it. The County Councils of Wales are speaking. The County Council of my own county of Montgomeryshire passed this resolution:—

> "That this Council expresses its opinion that no Tithes Bill will be satisfactory to the Welsh people unless it takes into consideration in what manner all the Welsh tithe rent-charges now applied to ecclesiastical uses may be devoted, so as to benefit the whole nation. Further, that any measure having for its object merely an alteration in the mode of collecting the tithe rent-charge, or removing the responsibility for the payment of the tithe rent-charge from the tenant farmer to the landlord will only increase the objection which, in consequence of the present application of the tithe rent-charge, exists so strongly in Wales against its payment."

And the County of Merionethshire passed this resolution—

> "That this Council having learnt that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to deal with the tithe questions in the approaching Session of Parliament, urges upon the Government the necessity of introducing a Bill that will acknowledge the tithe as national property to be applied to national purposes only."

I have no doubt that the County Councils by a large majority will take the trouble to express themselves to the same effect. Surely the fact that Wales is practically unanimous against this measure ought to be taken into consideration. We hear a great deal about the suffering produced and the oppression that is exercised in regard to this question, and I ask what better justification could we have for asking, for demanding the right to legislate for ourselves, and what other course is open to us than that which we now take when the Government proposes a measure like this, which is deliberately aimed at Wales, without taking the trouble to ascertain the feeling of the Welsh people with no attempt to conciliate public opinion on the subject. It is said, however, that we are naughty children and should be punished, and everybody regards this as a punitive measure. It is because we have misbehaved ourselves that the Bill has been brought in, but whatever movement there has been in Wales in relation to this question, has been absolutely and entirely spontaneous. It has sprung from the agricultural and peasant population of Wales. It has not been set on foot by writers on the press, or by popular representatives competing for popular fame, but it has sprung entirely from the agricultural population, who regard their present relation to the clergy as intolerable. The people of Wales refuse to pay for work that is not done. We all know that they do the work themselves in the noblest spirit, and in the most generous manner. They find their own spiritual advisers and ministers, and they object to pay for those who profess to do the work, and who do not perform it. It has been alleged that they have a pecuniary interest in this question, but it would be hard and unjust on the part of this House, or of the English people, to endorse any such accusation. The Welsh provide more amply for ministration to their spiritual wants than any other people in the United Kingdom, and it is no mercenary motive which influences them. It is with them purely a question of principle—a question of right and morality, and the reason they are so unanimous against this measure is because they cannot consent to any Act of Parliament that will perpetuate a state of things amounting to the gravest injustice. I think the Government ought to have been more ready to take notice of the fact that in the matter of tithes our Welsh people were really more conservative than the English people. The distinction which may be drawn between England and Wales on this question is, that while Wales generally admitted the burden and is prepared to protect the property and to assist in carrying out any legislation for the purpose of that protection it nevertheless rejects the application. In England, however, this is not the case; England admits the application, but is, to some extent, beginning to reject the burden. Already, there are indications in this country, of which the Government ought to take note, that the burden of tithes on the English farmer is setting him at loggerheads with the parson in too many cases. This Bill is intended to flog, but it flogs the wrong man, and is likely to raise dissatisfaction through the entire regiment. We ask ourselves what are likely to be the consequences. We see plainly it is a measure of police, and I trust that Parliament will listen to the protest of Wales, whatever may be the view of Her Majesty's Government. I think the Welsh Members generally will agree in advising the Government that as a measure of police this Bill will certainly not make it easier to keep the peace in Wales. Doubtless, you alter the form of procedure, but you do not take away the objections to it; you render the process more punitive, but I am quite satisfied that those who have studied the question most intimately, and who desire to save Wales from the risk of any intemperate action on the part of the people, would be the first to assure the Government that in their honest belief this measure of police will not make it easier for them to keep the peace in Wales. As to its being a protection to property the measure will simply be the means, in a number of cases, of setting landlord and tenant by the ears. It will transfer the grievance from the parson to the landlord, and will help to create a land question in Wales. If the Government intend to render this measure a protection for property in tithes, they will make a re-adjustment and valuation of tithes absolutely necessary in England. Is is said the measure is intended as a means of relief to the Welsh clergy. Well, Sir, I am sorry for the Welsh clergy; their lot is a miserable one. They are a peasant clergy, who are isolated and alone, and if anything is done that can add to their present hardships, it would be to me a matter of regret, but do you make it easier for them by this Bill, which will have the effect of rendering their present isolation more complete? It makes the clergyman absolutely dependent upon the squire, and renders his chance of recovering his hold on the people even less than it was before, if that be possible. If it is really the intention of the Government to hide this question from the public view, and prevent the external exhibition of the sentiment of the Welsh people in the matter, nothing could be more puerile. The tenant must know what he pays for tithes, the tithe will vary every year, and the tenant must certainly be possessed of the fact that he is paying the tithe, in whatever way he does pay it; therefore, to try and hide the matter must be a complete failure. But after all, the main object of this measure is to give a lingering life to the Church Establishment in Wales. On this question I would ask the Government whether they have ascertained the opinions of the

Welsh Members, whether Conservative, Unionist, or Liberal, on this point. For my own part, I am quite certain that they would not advise the Government that this Bill will afford the slightest chance of extending the dwindling days of the Church Establishment in Wales. All it will do is this, it will do something towards involving the question of Church Establishment in England, and the Government ought to be aware that they are running this risk. For my part, I do not care whether it produces this effect or not, because I am a Liberationist at heart. I trust, however, that the Government of this House will face what is the real question in Wales. If they do this the solution will be easy enough. It is to relieve Wales of the Establishment. There is no desire in Wales to attack the Church itself, except as an Establishment. Welsh people are a religious people, and never attack religious institutions, and I know that they have an immense respect for the history and tradition of the British Church. They are in the position now of having had a great quarrel with it, and still desire a reconciliation. I think it is a most serious and unhappy error of judgment, through want of personal contact with and knowledge of the people, to suppose that the Church of Wales would be other than benefited by being relieved of Establishment. The whole object of this measure is simply to save a little time. I think the delusion is entertained by friends of the Establishment in England that if the Establishment in Wales only has a little longer lease of life it will recover its hold upon the people. Their policy of holding on I believe to be an immense mistake. I do not want to indulge in figures, for I think there is nothing that may be made more misleading, but so far as the material progress of the Establishment is concerned I would ask, has it gained of late more hold in the affections of the people? We see plainly that Wales is more in earnest in this matter every day; and any one who faces an election in the Principality knows perfectly well that it can have no other result than a demand for Disestablishment. What is the policy which has led to the introduction of the present Bill? It is more than the policy of gaining time. It is a challenge to the people of Wales. Does Parliament desire to assist the Establishment in Wales in the business of proselytising, by upholding the Church in an unfair position? If Wales cares for Disestablishment and for her own nationality, she cares still more for fair play and justice, and she will never abide the result of any contest where the fight is not fair. How can it be said to be a fair fight when the Church possesses all these revenues, which the Welsh people think she ought not to possess. It is clear that the least the Church can do is to enter the arena on the same footing as Nonconformity, and to rest like Nonconformity on her high and sacred calling and mission; and then, in a fair and honourable rivalry for the general good of the people, to take that result which her merits, her energies, and her zeal will give her. To pass an Act of Parliament in order to assist her in maintaining an unjust state of things will never help her in the eyes of Wales. In her own interests, as much as in the interests of justice, the Welsh are only doing their duty in resisting this Bill to the utmost of their ability. (8.5.)

*(8.35.) VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): The hon. Member for Montgomeryshire is always entitled to great respect in the House whenever he speaks of the affairs of Wales, and consequently his criticisms both as to the possible effects this measure will have, if passed, not only on the Church question in Wales, but also on the probability or otherwise of its succeeding in its avowed object, the protection of property and making the enforcement and collection of tithes more easy, his opinion of the success or failure of the Bill in that respect is worthy of consideration by the House. But when the hon. Member leaves Wales, where we allow his opinions are entitled to all respect, and enters into the field of prophecy, or the possible and contingent relations not only of the Church question in England but also the relations between landlords and tenants in England, then I think we are entitled to turn to him and say that on English questions our opinions are, at least, as worthy of consideration as his. I wish most emphatically to express my dissent from all he says as to the probable or possible effect of the Bill in regard to England. First, I will deal with that portion of the hon. Member's speech in

which he, in sense, if not in actual words relied on the all-pervading fallacy that farmers in England have anything to do with the tithe question. It is true that, by a most unfortunate use of the Act of 1836, landlords have used farmers as the most convenient instruments for the payment of this debt, but it is also true that the farmer has only been an instrument, and has no further interest in the payment of the debt than the hon. Member would have if he paid sixpence for me at the neighbouring post office. Surely this consideration somewhat clears the ground, and surely, that being so, all question as to the Bill not effecting a relief of the farmer and doing the farmer no good, all this argument is beside the mark entirely. If it has any effect on the farmer at all the effect is favourable, for it will relieve him from the false position of being distrained upon for a debt he does not owe, and it may have another effect in the adjustment of the rent between himself and his landlord, when he will have the "pull of the market," and in bad times may be able to get a little abatement. But that is the whole extent to which this Bill can affect the farmer. It really seems unnecessary to go over this well-trodden ground again, but the fallacy on this point is so prevailing that it may be necessary to recapitulate. Does the farmer pay the tithe? Obviously he does not; for if he farms two adjoining pieces of land, and pays tithe on the one and not on the other, he pays an equivalent in rent in the latter case. Does the landlord pay the tithe? No, he does not. Here I come to a very ingenious theory of the hon. Member for Eye (Mr. Stevenson) but to which I must dissent, but at the same time allow me to point out that the speech entirely answered in advance that of the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire, who argued against the injustice of making the Welsh farmer pay tithe at all to the Church. The hon. Member for Eye proved conclusively that the farmer does not pay tithe at all, and the basis finally arrived at by the hon. Member was that the tithe is paid by the community. This is an extraordinary theory to have recourse to. The landlord does not pay the tithe, for if he inherited the land he paid the less succession duty than if there had been no tithe, and if he paid cash down he paid a sum much less than if there had been no tithe rent-charge. But does the fact that neither the landlord nor the tenant pays the tithe involve the vague and shadowy theory that the community pay it? Suppose the hon. Member for Eye had left me a fortune with a charge of £100 upon it for the National Gallery, can it be said that this is a charge on the community? No; the original donor pays it. The original donor of the tithe, long since defunct, pays the tithe; it is not paid by any living organism, landlord, tenant, or community. That brings me to the "conscience" argument. The hon. Member for Montgomeryshire appealed to Members to believe that he and his friends in their advocacy of Welsh Disestablishment did so on the principle that they believed it would be for the best for their country and for the Church, and we should be ungenerous and unjust to deny them the credit of this, though we may be opposed to them, and they will equally give us credit for conscientious motives. This leads me to that argument so often used that Welsh farmers object to pay tithes to an alien Church. Now, I do not wish to raise this question of an alien Church, or of Disestablishment, but I do want to examine this particular plea, and I ask how can men object to pay that which is not, and never has been, their own? The money which the Welsh farmer, acting as the agent of the landlord, hands over to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, or to the clergyman, is not his money or his landlords. It makes no difference in tracing the origin of the property; and the agency by which it is paid, it makes no difference in point of fact whether the money is paid to the Church, or whether, in the time of the millenium referred to by the hon. Member for Bradford, it is paid for the draining of your neighbour's field or mending local roads. In neither case does the landlord or the tenant pay the money; he merely hands over money that never has been his, and if he keeps it in his pocket he robs the person or Body to whom that money belongs. I can quite understand that Welsh farmers who have not had the opportunity of examining the very intricate question of the origin of tithe are conscientiously convinced that they are paying this money to the support of an alien Church. I do not quarrel with the Welsh farmer, for this his argument is based upon ignorance for which he probably is not responsible. Now members take exception to that remark; but if they are of opinion that children at a Board School, or even at any public school, are educated to understand the Tithe Question, I do not agree with them. It is an extremely elaborate question on which many well-educated men are ill-informed, and I therefore insinuate nothing against the intelligence of the Welsh farmer when I say he may be legitimately ignorant of the true nature of tithe. Therefore, in this debate we have two classes of objectors to meet—we have the objectors whose principles are embodied in the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Dorset (Mr. Farquharson) and the class of objectors to whom the hon. Member for Eye gives some sanction when he said how hard it is that the yeoman or small landowner cultivating his land should have to pay tithe upon it in those years when agricultural distress and Free Trade have so reduced the value of corn. Well, it is a very hard thing that he should have to pay this and his other claims, such as taxes, for instance; but I do not see how the small landowners can be dissociated from landowners as a whole, and I maintain that whether the tithe is paid to the Church or to some Public Body, in neither case has the landowner any claim whatever to have this question re-opened for his benefit. I am glad to see there is one part of the question upon which hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway take the same stand with me, differing as we do on the Church question. What is the history of the Tithe Commutation Act that it is sought to re-open? The hon. Member for Eye says it ought to be re-opened in the interest of payers as well as owners? Why, it was a settlement which no doubt was largely brought about with a view to taking away hindrances to the development of agricultural science. Yet it was a settlement from which landowners have reaped enormous profit. I should like to read to the House the evidence of Sir James Caird, and I suppose we all admit his authority on matters of land value. Before Mr. Inderwick's Committee in 1881 Sir James Caird was asked—

> "Do you adhere to what you said, that if the old rate of participation had continued in regard to tithe the income of the Church would have been £2,000,000 more than it has been, and that the whole of that difference has gone into the pockets of the landowners?"

Sir James Caird's answer is—

> "So far as I know, I do not know where else the difference can have gone."

Well, if that is the case, as I believe it is on what past principle can the advocates of the landowners ask that the question shall be re-opened in their interest? Surely they have done pretty well by the bargain. Therefore, the real question before us, whether we are Churchmen or whether we are Liberationists is how the value of the tithe can be properly maintained. Whether the Church is to be disendowed and the tithe used for the various purposes such have been referred to or not, it is quite clear that it is the interest of those who advocate either view that the tithe should be as large as possible. I do not think the members of the Liberation Society are likely to lend their votes to any Amendment having the effect of re-opening the question in the interests of the landowners. But, says the hon. Member for Eye, there are certain districts in Berkshire, in Lincolnshire, and elsewhere, where land has so deteriorated in value, that payment of tithe has become an impossibility, and where exceptional circumstances have prevailed exceptional measures must be taken or agriculture will be at a standstill. Now, I have no personal knowledge of such districts, and I view with a little suspicion any proposal to re-open this question in however small a district, for it is obvious that the first person to derive benefit will be the landowner; but if an argument can be made in favour of any scheduled district, no doubt the House would be ready to listen to such an argument if properly supported by facts. But, upon the general ground of re-opening this question, I must protest against the claim of the tithepayer to re-valuation. It being alike the interest of Churchmen and Liberationalists to see that payment of tithe is made secure, and that tithe should be made as stable as possible it is difficult for me to appreciate the attitude of hon. Members who oppose the Second Reading of this Bill. I can understand their special technical objections levelled at the Redemption Clauses, but I do not understand such opposition levelled at the earlier portion of the Bill which has no other object in view whatever except rendering the collection of tithe more secure. What was the argument running through the speech of the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire? He appealed to us, and he will do me the justice to allow that I give him full credit for the conscientiousness of his appeal, upon the principle by which he is actuated. But granted that he is actuated by principle only, how does the question of the collection of tithe at all affect the subject? If he is actuated by a principle quite extraneous to all outside considerations, as I believe it is, how can it affect the advancement of that principle so dear to our opponents, that tithe should be collected by the County Court and not by means of distraint? There is a section of Liberationists in Wales who openly avow other motives, but I do not believe the hon. Member gives them sympathy or aid. We have heard read to-day an extract from the *South Wales Daily News*, in which it is openly stated, "We must keep this open as a lever for the Disestablishment of the Church." I appeal to hon. Members who are above such motives as that, whose views on the question are dictated by a sense of what they consider right, and not as a means of keeping open a sore for political ends; I appeal to them to regard this Bill from the point of view whether it will bring about a greater amount of kindliness and peace to the country; whether it will help to explain to the tenant that tithe is but a debt due from the land, and will put an end to scenes of ill-blood and disorder, which have brought discredit on the fair fame of Wales. If the Bill is approached in this spirit, and not in a hostile spirit such as finds expression in the sentiments of the *South Wales Daily News*, I feel confident that although details of the Bill may be open to criticism, and they may do good service by suggesting amendments, that hon. Members will support the principle of the Bill and unite with us in bringing about a better application of a law, which they hope some day to turn to their own advantage.

Mr. A. THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.): The noble Lord (Viscount Wolmer) has asked what will bring peace to Wales. Disestablishment will bring peace to the Principality—nothing else and nothing short of it. I thank the Government for bringing in a series of Tithe Bills, for I am bound to say that by their action they have done more to advance the cause of Disestablishment than all the efforts of Liberationists put together. I regret, however, that the Government have put on the landlord the duty of collecting tithe. In Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire, those counties in Wales about which I know most, the most cordial relations exist between landlord and tenant; but if the landlords have to collect the tithe, I certainly have fear as to the future. I should have thought the Government would have taken to heart the lesson they were taught last year. They must not suppose that all those who voted for the Amendment to last year's Bill were at one with that Amendment. As a matter of fact, they were not, and many of them only voted for it because it was the only means they had of expressing their opposition to the measure. It is said that the Welsh tenant farmer objects to pay tithe. He does not, any more than he objects to pay any other just debt. What he objects to is that the tithe should go to a small Church, to the Church of the landlord, the Church of the wealthy people, the Church of about one-sixth of the people. I do not know whether the majority of the people of England object to the Establishment or not, but my mind is quite made up on that point as regards Wales. Of 34 Members returned by Wales, 28 were returned to advocate Disestablishment. As to the provisions of the Bill, I cannot find much fault; my objection is to the application of the tithe. It has been said by some Gentlemen that tithe is required in order to ensure the success of the Church of England, and last year the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. B. Reed) asserted that the Church of England has succeeded not only in the English-speaking districts of Wales, but in the Welsh-speaking districts. I rejoice if the Church of England has succeeded, but I think the hon. Member will agree with me that the Church has succeeded nowhere in Wales more than in Cardiff. In that town the Church of England has 18 places of worship and sitting accommodation for something over 10,000 persons. But to carry on her great work there how much does the

Church receive by way of tithe? Not a larger sum than £350 a year. As a matter of fact, the Church of England succeeds most in Wales in the very place where she receives least tithe. I do not deny that in the ranks of the Church there are many very popular men. For instance, there is no more popular man in Cardiff or Glamorganshire than the Dean of Llandaff. But the question of Disestablishment in Wales is the burning question. The people may be divided on other questions, but as to Disestablishment they are at one. The Government may legislate as much as they like in regard to tithe; but until they bring in a great and comprehensive measure for the Disestablishment of the Church of England, there will be no peace in the Principality.

*MR. HEATH (Lincoln, Louth): I shall support the Second Reading of the Bill because I think the Government have dealt very ably with this thorny question of the tithe. The measure contains three principles which seem to me to be well worthy of support, namely, making tithe apply like any other debt; putting the actual burden of the tithe upon the proper shoulders—those of the landowner—and facilitating the redemption. At the same time, I think the Bill has some defects, and I hope we shall see it amended before it becomes law. One defect is, that it gives a great deal more to the tithe owner than to the tithepayer. We have heard a great deal to-day about the landowners; but this question does not affect the landowners or large farmers at all. In the case of the large farmers, the tithe is reckoned in the rent. But there is a very large class of small freeholders in this country—in the division I represent there are 2,000 of them—and it is on them the burden of the tithe falls. I hope some Amendment will be carried which will give some *quid pro quo* under this Bill to these small freeholders. When the Tithe Commutation Act was passed, the tithe owners took the remedy of distress, because at that time that remedy was probably the cheapest and readiest to adopt. Now, owing to circumstances, the remedy of distress is no longer so easy as other remedies. These small freeholders, under present circumstances, have certain advantages. It is not worth while, for the purpose of getting a small payment, to incur the odium and cost of distress, and, in many instances during the hard times of the last few years, the small men have got reductions and time, which they would probably not have got if this Bill had been in force. I hope the Government will see their way to giving them some compensation for the loss of this advantage—something in the nature of the 5 per cent. proposed when the original Bill was introduced. That would make the measure much sweeter to them if this were done. I hope, also, we may see another Amendment carried. We are going to advance 33 millions of money to the Irish farmer to allow him to redeem his rent, and I hope the small English freeholder, whose dessert and whose need are quite as great as those of the Irish tenant, may have the same advantage as you are going to give the Irish tenant. I trust we shall enable the small freeholder to redeem his tithe by means of a small annuity extending over 49 years at 4 per cent. In my opinion, this Bill will settle a great question which has been troubling us for many years; will remove what has been for a long time a great stumbling block in the way of the English Church; and, with the Amendments I suggest, will be received by the tithe owner as well as the tithepayer as a great boon.

*(9.20.) MR. ARTHUR WILLIAMS (Glamorganshire, S.): The right hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading said that in the settlement of 1836 the principle was laid down that there should be no personal liability. If the House will allow me for a moment to turn back to the proposals of the Government on this question during the last few years, they will find that this is, at all events, a new discovery on the part of Ministers. In 1887, for reasons with which I need not now trouble the House, a great deal of dissatisfaction had arisen with reference to the incidence of the tithe rent-charge. The clergy could not get their tithes, and the farmers said that they could not, or would not, pay them. The Prime Minister introduced a Bill in the House of Lords, in which he proposed to abolish distress and to turn the tithe rent-charge into a civil contract due from the landlord. He also proposed to bribe the landlord with 5 per cent. commission in order to induce him to become the collector of the tithe. The

provision gave rise to a storm of opposition on the part of the clergy, and the proposal to pay 5 per cent. was rejected or withdrawn. In an essay which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, and which was attributed to Lord Salisbury and his nephew, there was a very hostile criticism on the attitude of the Whigs at the time of the publication of the *Unauthorised Programme* One epigram used in that essay has remained in my memory. The writer said, "The Whigs regarded the *Unauthorised Programme* with public approval and private imprecation." A similar attitude was adopted by the landlords when it was proposed that they should become liable for the tithe as a simple contract debt to be recovered in the County Court. Another Bill was brought in in the Session of 1888. That measure proposed to abolish distress and adopted substantially the same method as we find in the present Bill. It gave great dissatisfaction. The whole of the landlord party throughout the Kingdom evidently regarded it with jealousy, suspicion, and dislike, and it was dropped. In 1889 it became necessary that something should be done in a substantial way. The Welsh people struck against the payment of tithe. The Bill of 1889 abolished distress, and it also proposed to put the payment of tithe on the tenant. The Government now come back to the method of 1880. They propose to avoid the Scylla and Charybdis of personal liability of both tenant and landlord; but, at the same time, to impose grievous penalties very often upon both. Though the order of the County Court Judge can only be enforced nominally against the landlord there is only an apparent withdrawal of liability. It seems to me there is a very close family resemblance between the provisions of the Bill and the eviction process adopted in the case of the Irish tenants. The difficulty arises when the landlord has paid the tithe and has put it on the rent. My hon. Friend the Member for Montgomeryshire has pointed out in reference to this Bill that 28 out of the 30 Members for Wales are opposed to it, and that those 28 Members represent an enormous majority of the Welsh farmers. But I contend that it does not stop there. I wish to submit that they also represent the land-owning classes throughout Wales. I find in the *Times* of December, 1889, a very curious report of a great meeting at Rhyl. The *Times'* report says of this meeting that the most diverse opinions were entertained on all the subjects brought forward with the exception of one, and that was that there was a perfect unanimity of feeling to the effect that the Tithe Bill which laid the burden of paying the tithe on the Welsh landowner was impracticable. Mr. Humphreys, a Welsh landlord, is reported to have said that the Government proposal simply transferred the onus of the payment of tithe from the tenant to the landlord, and that all it meant was that the estrangement which had existed between the clergy and the farmers would in future exist between the landlords and the clergy. Another Welsh landlord, Mr. Priestley, in his speech, gave utterance to similar opinions, and added that he "had no doubt that tithes must go sooner or later, and the Church, and all of them would be the stronger for it. The Conservative Party and the Government ought to be warned that the great majority of the people in Wales looked upon these proposals (the Government tithe proposals) as absolutely inadequate." Well, the result of this meeting was, of course, an immediate outcry on the part of the Welsh clergy, some of whom wrote to the *Times* complaining of the attitude and demeanour of the landlords towards the Church. One letter which appeared in the *Times* asked "what the landlords had done to help the Church and to increase its popularity," and the leading article which appeared in the same issue said the answer to that question must perforce be "very little." The article also went on to speak of the falling out which had taken place between the clergy and the landlords of Wales as "a very unlovely quarrel." Now, that was a state of things which arose in Wales when these proposals of the Government were first made public. It was felt that the result of adopting them in Wales would be to transfer the friction which exists with the clergy from the tenant to the landlord class, and it was held that nothing could be more undesirable. This Bill, as has been well said, is nothing more nor less than a Bill of "pains and penalties," by which a most invidious duty is cast upon the land-owning class—a duty which must cause a great deal of ill-feeling and difficulty between the landlords and the clergy. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade made an observation about the lawlessness of the refusal to pay a just debt; and I think his observation was directed mainly against my Colleagues and myself in this House, seeing that we represent the great body of the Welsh people. I think it is most unfortunate that, in discussing a Bill of this kind, such a tone and temper should be adopted by a Minister of the Crown. I, for my part, do not for one moment refuse to accept responsibility for what has taken place in Wales. It is perfectly clear that this Bill is the outcome of the Welsh agitation, and it behoves the House and the Government now to face the whole matter. The late Dean of Bangor, the brother of the Bishop of St. Asaph, himself admitted that "five-sixths of the Welsh-speaking people are outside the Established Church in Wales." Archdeacon Howell also, in a remarkable sermon, declared that

> "The majority of the Welsh people are not to be found within the pale of the Church whose adherents were largely made up o English settlers and anglicised Welshmen."

Now, Archdeacon Howell is himse a Welshman; he was born within a mile or two of my native place; he was brought up among the Welsh people; he is an eloquent Church clergyman; and here we have from him a distinct admission that almost the whole of the Welsh-speaking people are outside the pale of the Established Church. Now, who are the people who have set on foot the agitation which has led to the introduction of this Bill? They are the Welsh Congregationalists and Baptists, and members of other denominations. These people have built their own places of worship out of their scanty earnings—the colliers, the peasants, the agricultural labourers, the small farmers, the small shopkeepers, have been for centuries building up the whole structure of that great religious faith which is so vital throughout Wales. For generations they have been doing these things; and yet, during the whole of that time, £280,000 a year has been withdrawn from the produce of the soil, in the shape of tithe, in order to pay the clergy who minister to only a small minority of the population, a minority which consists mainly of English born people. Up till 1868 they had to submit quietly to this state of things, because they had no adequate representation in this House; but in 1884 they began to give utterance to their views, and, having had the franchise extended to them, they were able to state their opinions on this and many other matters of great interest to their country. In regard to the agitation in Wales on the tithe question, I wish to point out that they have not violently resisted the operation of the law, except in a few cases where they have been irritated by injudicious treatment. In the majority of cases they have adapted the system pursued by the Quakers in reference to the church rates. They simply said, "Here is public money which you apply to purposes contrary to our principles. We will not resist you, but we will not pay these tithes until you put in operation the methods which the law affords you for executing process against us." For my part, I do not want to see any change in the attitude of the Welsh people, and I hope that they will continue determined to oppose this payment towards the maintenance of an alien Church. I trust they will maintain that attitude until the tithes which are collected are applied to national and public purposes.

*(9.45.) MR. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I should not have taken part in the debate at this stage had it not been for the somewhat pointed references made to myself by the hon. Member for East Glamorganshire. I noted with some satisfaction that the observations which it was my privilege to make in this House when the subject of the Church in Wales was debated last year fell upon an interested hearer in the person of the hon. Member. Sir, the *personnel* of this debate, so far as it has proceeded, is a sufficient index of the premises of this measure. It is a fact that, so far as the opposition to the Bill is concerned, it has been mainly expressed by Welsh Representatives; and I am perfectly willing to admit that it was the fact of the peculiar difficulty in Wales in connection with the collection of tithe-rent charge which gave rise to the necessity for legislation in this respect. I am not by any means desirous of limiting, nor, indeed, does the Bill propose to limit, this reform in legislation

to the Principality of Wales. On the contrary, I hold that the tithe owner and the tithe-payer all over the country will be benefited by the provisions of this Bill, which is shortly to become law. I think the tithe owner and the tithe-payer will find their relations in regard to this peculiar form of rent-charge more harmonious and more convenient than they have been in the past. I have been very much puzzled to understand in the course of this debate the attitude of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I have been accustomed for a number of years to hear, not only in the House of Commons, but also in the country, declamations from hon. Gentlemen opposite and their associates against the payment of tithe as a State tax; and I have been accustomed to hear these Gentlemen urge public audiences to agitate for the abolition of tithe, not on the ground of its wrong application, but on the ground that there is a bad principle involved in the tithe itself.

MR. PICTON: Name. No, no.

*MR. BYRON REED: In spite of the contradiction of hon. Gentlemen opposite, I say, from my personal knowledge of the facts, that that has been the vein in which the tithe controversy has been carried on; and I am speaking in the recollection of the House when I say that objection has been made to the payment of the tithe itself, and not to the application of the tithe. But now, Sir, we hear that tithe is a most excellent charge, and one most proper to be paid, and one which should be cheerfully met, if only its application were fair, and that the real objection to this Tithe Bill is not in the fact that the tithe payment is to be enforced, but it is to the religious purposes to which some of the tithe payments are applied. I am not in the councils of the Liberation Society; but I believe hon. Members opposite, who are members of that Organisation, claim that tithe is national property, and, being national property, that it ought not to be handed over to a religious body—it ought not to be diminished by one jot or tittle in bulk or volume; so that by-and-bye, when a future Parliament comes to deal with the question of Disestablishment, the tithe will be more easily available for secular purposes by reason of the operation of the provisions of this Act. I am not, Sir, now attempting to draw aside the veil of the future. I merely mention this matter by way of expressing surprise, and of taking public note of that extraordinary metamorphosis in the views of hon. Gentlemen opposite, which has been exhibited in the course of this debate. I heard with some interest the speech of the hon. Member for Leicester, and I have to thank the hon. Gentleman for a most important and valuable admission which he made. The hon. Gentleman, speaking in reference to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, said that the Commissioners were not a national body, but were trustees for a religious denomination. I do not understand him to dispute the accuracy of my quotation. Then, what becomes of the claim of hon. Members opposite to the property which these Commissioners hold in trust? What becomes of their claim to this as national property? If the Commissioners are trustees for a religious denomination, then surely the application of the property held in trust must be to that religious denomination. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Leicester for giving me a weapon to be used in the controversy outside this House. There is another observation of the hon. Gentleman which merits further notice. He has thrown a curious side-light on the motives and aims of hon. Gentlemen opposite. He said that tithes are a first charge on the national land. I do not know what he meant to imply by that expression, and whether he meant to suggest that he is a disciple of Mr. Henry George, and that this House may look forward to a debate at no distant period when the hon. Member will propose a Resolution in favour of the nationalisation of the land, which, being interpreted, means taking away other people's property. But the observation, coming from him, struck me as being peculiarly significant, being associated, as it was, with the desire to deprive the National Church and other tithe owners of their property in this form of rent-charge. I commend the observation to landed proprietors on the Opposition Benches, who are, on other subjects, often found associated with the hon. Member for Leicester. It is a matter which may give them some concern. And now I pass to the observations of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Glamorganshire, to whom I must say I listened with considerable pleasure, and in whom I recognised a decided acquisition to the debating strength of this House. The hon. Gentleman quoted some remarks made by the First Lord of the Treasury not long since upon this subject, and he suggested that the right hon. Gentleman admitted that tithes were national property. It may not be within the knowledge of the hon. Member that the First Lord of the Treasury, having had his attention drawn by the Member for Stockport to the language which he had used, two days later explained to the House the precise meaning which he attached to the term National, and that he thereby considerably modified the impression which his previous words had conveyed. No doubt that explanation escaped the hon. Gentleman's notice.

*MR. S. T. EVANS: No: it had not escaped my notice; I happened to have the explanation in my hands when I was speaking, and had any remarks fallen from the First Lord of the Treasury I was quite willing to refer to that explanation. I rather think, as a matter of fact, that the right hon. Gentleman adhered to his statement that tithes were national property, although he qualified his statement by saying that he did not agree with our proposals regarding the application of them.

*MR. REED: I will not further contest the point. I am speaking in the knowledge of the House, and I believe that hon. Members on both sides will agree that the First Lord of the Treasury qualified his original statement in a very marked degree. The hon. Gentleman went on to say that the Welsh, as a nation of Nonconformists, were not satisfied with this appropriation of national property. I venture to point out that it matters not to the House whether the Welsh are a nation of Nonconformists or anything else, or whether they regard tithes as national property or otherwise. I regard the payment of tithe as a duty which every honest man who contracts it ought to pay. Let it be remembered that tithe is not a charge forced upon a man against his will. No man need contract to pay tithe unless he likes to, and if he does undertake the obligation he receives a full consideration for it. If he becomes a tenant of a farm upon which tithe is payable, he gets the holding at a lower rent than he would have to pay for a tithe-free farm; and if he purchases land liable to tithe he gets it at a proportionately lower price than is charged for land on which there is no such liability; and I say it is the essence of the grossest dishonesty for a man who has made a bargain under these conditions to come to this House with a grievance on his lips and ask for relief from a contract to which he became a party with his eyes open. I am sorry to be hard on the hon. Member; but I should like to correct him as to a matter of history. Reference has been made by the hon. Gentleman to the tripartite division of tithe, and I am aware that it is said by some controversialists that in the old days tithe was divided into three parts; one third for the maintenance of the fabric, one third for the support of the minister, and one third for the relief of the poor. The hon. Member apparently adopted that view, for he has referred to the third part as that belonging to the poor. May I point out to him that it must be in the knowledge of almost every scholar and every antiquarian that that tripartite division was never the law of the land in Britain? It was the law in certain countries on the Continent; but it was never the law here, and at the most it was only a recommendation—an expression of an amiable hope to the Bishops of the Church, more than 1,000 years ago, that some of the tithe should be thus devoted to the poor. I believe the highest authority to whom I could refer the hon. Member is the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who, I think, will confirm my view that a tripartite division was not a part of the law of this land. Now, I pass on to the concluding observations of the hon. Member. He spoke in tones of complaint of the effect of the tithe on a certain parish in Glamorganshire. The hon. Member stated that the County of Glamorgan paid £40 a year to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester.

*MR. S. T. EVANS: What I said was that £3,000 per annum went from Glamorgan to the Dean and Chapter, and that there was only one solitary sum of £40 that went to charitable objects.

*MR. BYRON REED: I apologise to the hon. Member for having confused his statement, and of course I at once accept his explanation. The point is, as I understand it, that the poor country of Wales has to contribute large sums of money in tithe payments for ecclesiastical purposes to a rich country like

England. But even if that is so, Wales receives much more from England in return. I have here a Return dated 12th April, 1889, showing that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners received from Wales £28,796 per annum—a very formidable sum, I have no doubt the hon. Member for Glamorgan will say. But, on the other hand, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have paid back for ecclesiastical purposes in Wales the sum of £67,634, showing a balance given for ecclesiastical purposes by England to Wales of £38,838. This Bill has been described as a "Clergy Relief Bill." I am not ashamed to accept that designation. But I would prefer to call it the "Clergy Protection Bill." It is something more, because it protects the lay as well as the clerical tithe owners and not only that, but it protects the Nonconformist ministerial tithe owners; and that there are such may, perhaps, be in the way of information to some hon. Members. I am not ashamed to defend the temporalities of the clergy, who have no direct representation in this House. The clergy, at any rate, have a good claim as citizens for the preservation of their temporalities. By reason of their office, by the necessity of their environments, by the fact that most of them are poor and isolated, the clergy have a peculiar claim to our consideration. When I think of their heroic examples, their kindly and boundless charities, their exalted personal character, and their high education and learning, I feel impelled, as a layman of the National Church, to stand up and defend the temporalities and rights of the clergy in this honourable House. It is because I believe that the present measure will, in a great degree, bring that about, that I wish most cordially to support and aid by all the means in my power its speedy passage into law.

*(10.7.) MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): Mr. Speaker, the clergy of the Church of England have hardly any right to complain that they are not well represented here, at all events as long as they are represented by the hon. Member who has just sat down. At the outset, Sir, I must deny that the farmers of Wales seek to escape the payment of tithe. They have objected all along, not to the payment, but to the application of the money. Now, this is essentially a Welsh Bill, and admittedly nothing would have been heard of it if it had not been for the agitation in Wales. The name of the Postmaster General is on the back of the Bill, and he is a sort of standing counsel to the Government in Welsh matters. But on this matter I am bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman represents the opinions of the University of Cambridge rather than those of Wales. Having just come from the Principality, I can assure the Post master General, with some confidence, that the Bill is generally, if not universally, condemned. It is not liked by landlords, tenant-farmers, County Councillors, or Nonconformists; and I much doubt whether the clergy would like it if they were not just now bound to be thankful for small mercies. It is looked upon as an attempt to do that which nothing short of a miracle will do, namely, to set the Church of England in Wales on its legs again. The Welsh landlords and tenants regard it as a Bill to set them at loggerheads for the benefit of the Welsh parsons. I think, however, we ought to be grateful to them for it, for in the Carnarvon boroughs, when this Bill was introduced, it created such a scare that the Conservatives found the greatest difficulty in obtaining a candidate, and, like the people in the parable, they had almost to go into the highways and hedges to compel someone to come in. The Government in bringing forward the Bill at the present time has not exactly shown the wisdom of the serpent. The position of the opponents of the Bill is perfectly well defined. They do not object to the incidence of the tithe; what they object to is its application. They claim as their authority the First Lord of the Treasury, who described tithes as national property. The hon. Gentleman who spoke last stated perfectly truly that the right hon. Gentleman qualified that statement by saying that the tithes are national property, because the property of a national Church; but that is true only in a limited sense; and it is not true of Wales, where only three out of 30 Welsh Members can be rallied to vote against the disestablishment of the Church. The right hon. Gentleman drew a picture of the sufferings of the Welsh clergy. No one sympathises more than I do with the sufferings of the Welsh clergy; but do not those sufferings show that they

have lost the affections of their flocks? Are ministers allowed to starve by the Baptists or Congregationalists of Wales, the Wesleyans of Cornwall, the Unitarians of Birmingham, or the Roman Catholics of Ireland? A clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. H. W. Clarke, has recently published a pamphlet on *The Past and Present Revenues of the Church of England in Wales.* The figures are taken from official sources, and it is there shown that in the three dioceses of Bangor, St. Asaph, and Llandaff the tithe rent-charge payable to incumbents amount to £101,856, while the pew rents, fees and offerings for the maintenance of the incumbents in 748 Episcopal churches amount to £4,738, or £7 a year from each congregation, consisting of the richest classes of Wales. For every pound each clergyman derives from tithe rent-charge he obtains from his own congregation th sum of 10¾d. The Bill begins at the wrong end. Let the tithes be applied to national purposes, and it will be found that the collection of them in Wales will be as easy a matter as the collection of Poor rates and School Board rates. That seems also to be the opinion of English farmers, for at a meeting of the Farmers' Alliance a Resolution has been passed declaring that—

> "No measure will be satisfactory which does not demand that the redemption price be handed to the County Councils, or which makes any alteration in the mode of recovery."

But then it is argued that, as this Bill deals simply with the mode of collecting the tithes, we, to whom the collection is comparatively a matter of indifference, have no right to oppose it. I cannot accept that view of the case. We who oppose this Bill believe that a State Church is an evil in itself, and we absolutely decline to be parties to any measure which has for its object the securing in perpetuity of the revenues of the Church. No doubt it is unfortunate for any Church to be unable to collect its revenues without coming to the House of Commons for aid. But that is the fault of the system, not the fault of those who oppose the Bill, and they cannot be blamed for taking the opportunity to raise such a debate as this. The Bill has met with strenuous opposition from all interests; but with regard to Wales, the strongest opposition seems to have come from the habitual supporters of the Government. A Conservative meeting at Rhyl was held three or four months ago, preceded by a conference of Conservative landowners. The meeting was held to consider the Tithe Rent-Charge Bill of last Session, practically the same measure as that before the House, and the First Lord of the Admiralty spoke. Here is a paper with a report of his speech, surmounted by a portrait of the noble Lord, which hardly does him justice. But though the meeting was called to bless the Bill, it reversed the part of Balaam, for it ended in cursing it altogether. Every one of the papers interested in agriculture, too, oppose the Bill, root and branch, and as was stated by a speaker at the Rhyl meeting in Wales, Conservatives and Liberals are united, not in an objection to pay tithes, but in an objection to pay them to the present recipients. The Bill is divided into three parts. The first deals with the means of recovering the tithe rent-charge, substituting an action in the County Court for distress. The second transfers the liability of the rent-charge from the occupier to the owner; and the third part contains the redemption clauses. I do not think these latter clauses will be of much use, because the tithe owner will not desire to redeem, in view of the lower interest which he will receive, and the tithepayer will not in many cases be able to do so. In Wales there is the very strongest objection to the substitution of the County Court for distress. The Welsh farmer hates nothing so much as the County Court, and for the clergy to bring their parishioners into the County Court would certainly not help to increase their popularity. Moreover, the proposition of the Government substitutes an expensive remedy for a comparatively inexpensive one; and the occupier would become liable not only for the tithe, but for all the costs of the County Court action, amounting at least to £10 or £12. Then the execution is to be carried out by Receivers (who are also to be managers), and I can assure the House that there is not a more cumbrous and expensive process than this. In fact, those who wish to disestablish the Church could not serve their ends better than by strongly supporting this part of the Bill, for it is sure to intensify the unpopularity of the Church. In substituting the owner for the occupier as the person liable for the charge, little benefit will be achieved, because the landlord will be sure to add the tithe to the rent. Then, of course, the large number of small Welsh occupiers, who are also owners, will receive no relief, and nearly every one of them is a Nonconformist. They have before offered a passive resistance to the tithe, and they will still continue to do so, while the people of Wales will continue to sympathise with the sufferers. One of the effects of the Bill will be that under Sections 1 and 6 (Sub-section 2), the tithe owner and land owner will be able to agree as to the amount of the tithe behind the back of the occupier, who will become ultimately liable. I will also say that the Government have chosen a singularly inopportune moment for bringing in this Bill. Just when the three counties which bore one-fifth of the whole tithe-charge of England—Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk—were recovering from the agricultural depression, the Government, the friends of the landed interests, are re-opening the question of tithes in the interest of the tithe owner. I also think the moment singularly inopportune with regard to the state of the agitation in Wales, which was beginning to die out. So long as the Establishment remains some form of agitation will remain, but this particular agitation was beginning to die out. Things were beginning to settle down when the Government rake up the slumbering embers. I cannot help thinking that it would have been better to let sleeping dogs lie, especially as it seems to us that the proposal they are making contains the maximum of irritation with the minimum of result. There are three methods of dealing with such a question as this. You could boldly grasp it and treat it as a great national question—that is the best way. The second best way is to let it alone, and the third, or worst of all way, is to potter and tinker with it. That is the method adopted by the Government who have brought forward these cumbrous proposals. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman opposite has a docile and obedient majority at his back who will pass the Second Reading of the Bill; but I warn the right hon. Gentleman that it is not until the measure gets amongst the shoals and quicksands of Committee that its real fate will be decided. In the meantime, I ask is it wise, just, or statesmanlike, to force on a Bill of this kind, admittedly designed to meet the case of Wales, against the unanimous feeling of Welsh Members, for not one single Conservative Welsh Member has had the courage to get up and support the Bill, although five Welsh Members have spoken from this side against it. Is it wise to force a Bill of this kind down the throats of even a small nation like Wales—for the measure is especially aimed at Wales? It is because I hold it to be neither wise, just, nor statesmanlike that, whatever may be the opinion of my Colleagues around me, I shall feel bound to vote against it at every stage.

(10.35.) MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): The information of the right hon. Gentleman is singularly misleading. He has first of all assured us on his own knowledge that the objection to pay tithe in Wales is wholly on account of its application. I take leave to contradict that statement flatly. Several of the fights about tithe have been in cases where the owners are not ecclesiastical, and the principal fight has been about the tithe paid to the undenominational society of Christ Church. The objection to the payment of lay tithe, therefore, has been as great as that to the payment of ecclesiastical tithe. I think I am entitled to correct the right hon. Gentleman on this point. But the right hon. Gentleman then brought us news of certain Conservative meetings at Rhyl, and he tells us that declarations were made against the Bill of last Session.

*MR. O. MORGAN: I referred to a Conference that preceded the meeting at Rhyl.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: Well, let me assure the right hon. Gentleman that that Conference passed by an unanimous vote a resolution approving of the Government Bill of last year, which the right hon. Gentleman says was the same as that now before the House. I think, therefore, I have a right to say that the right hon. Gentleman, before setting himself to tell us what the opinion of the people of Wales is on this question, should have satisfied himself thoroughly as to the accuracy of his information. Then the right hon. Gentleman tells us that the Church people are very few in Wales, as if that had anything to do with the question. As a matter of fact, the

Church people are a larger Body than any other religious denomination in Wales. ["Oh!"] Yes; the Calvinistic Methodists, who are the next in number, are 50 per cent. smaller. ["Oh!"] Will the hon. Member who challenges the statement name any Religious Body which is more numerous than the Church?

*MR. S. EVANS: There are three, at least. [*Cries of* "Name."]

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: Those are the inaccurate assertions which are made by the opponents of the Church in Wales, while the men who make them are afraid of a religious census, and content themselves with gathering statistics at chapel doors. They know that if they had a census the facts which are now well-known would then be placed on an authoritative basis. The right hon. Gentleman objected to throwing the burden on the owners instead of the occupiers, and making the tithe rent-charge recoverable by the owners.

*MR. O. MORGAN: No; I said I had the greatest objection to altering the remedy from distress to the County Court.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: That is the same thing. If you have a distress you must distrain upon the occupier; you cannot do so on the owner, as he has no visible property to distrain on. The right hon. Gentleman has not so much criticised the Bill as gone off upon broader issues. He has said that the tithes are national property. Well, that is a matter upon which we hear so many loose opinions that, perhaps, it will be as well to mention what the law is. Lord Brougham has said—

> "I think the right of the Church in the property it enjoys is sacred as the rights of individuals to their estates and freeholds, and that the parson of the parish has as good a right to the tenth part of the produce of the soil as the body of the proprietors and occupiers to have the other nine-tenths."

And that the pastor of a parish has as good a right to a tenth part of the produce of the soil as anyone had to any property. Then the right hon. Gentleman may have once read Blackstone, though he has forgotten him now. Blackstone says—

> "The clergy have precisely the same right to the tithes as the heir-at-law has to his ancestor's estate, and the proprietor has no more reason to complain that his land is not tithe free than he has that his neighbour's field is not his own."

Professor Freeman also says—

Mr. Stanley Leighton

> "Church property is not national property except in the same sense that all property is national."

After this, perhaps, the right hon. Gentleman will not repeat the statement that the tithe is national property. He and his friends may wish it to be so, and use arguments coloured by that desire, but national property it is not. I decline to discuss this question as though it were an ecclesiastical question. I hope it will be dealt with on the broad principle of the security of all property. The payment is now to be made by the landowner as we all know it was intended to be by the Commutation Act. I defy any Welsh Member to go to an agricultural constituency and put it before the farmers whether they would like to have the tithe paid by themselves or their landlords. I defy any Member to get a majority in favour of tithes being paid by the farmers themselves. Why, only the other day the Farmers' Club declared that the landowners, if they paid the tithe themselves, would have little to complain of. I have taken pains to ascertain what the opinion of the agriculturists is on the point; and when I brought forward a Bill some four or five years ago to make the tithes payable by the landlord, almost all the Chambers of Agriculture were in favour of it. Farmers to a man were in favour of it, though they may be, as the Mover of the Amendment described them in the *Contemporary Review*, men "of obstinate and bucolic habits." The agitation in Wales is described as a spontaneous agitation, but it is nothing of the kind. It is a got-up agitation. It has been described by a great authority on the question as "an artificial growth, assiduously cultivated by Liberationist orators and a vernacular Press." The same writer declared—

> "It may, in fact, be truly said that the anti-tithe agitation of North Wales has, in the main, emanated from the office of the *Banner* at Denbigh. The Organisation and pulpits of the chapels, aided by house-to-house visitations of Calvinistic Methodist deacons, backed by the inflammatory harangues of itinerant agitators, and encouraged by the promises of the vernacular Press, spread the contagion from parish to parish. In one case which has come to my knowledge, the principal agitator was a local money-lender, who put the screw upon his debtors to join the agitation. Threats, coercion, intimidation, were freely used."

*MR. STUART RENDEL: Whose language is the hon. Member quoting?

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I am quoting the language of Mr. Prothero, who is, I suppose, one of the best authorities on the subject. I am glad to say that the right hon. Gentleman opposite has described the Welsh people as the fairest-minded people in the world. Yes, and so they are. It is only a minority of agitators supported and backed up by political partisans who are unfair. The great body of Nonconformists strongly protest against the method of the hon. Gentleman and his friends, and one Calvinistic minister, the Rev. Parry Hughes, has said—

> "I conceive that nothing so unjust or illogical as the present persecution of the clergy was ever projected, and I acknowledge with shame that it has been reserved for the Nonconformist promoters and supporters of the anti-tithe campaign in Wales, in defiance of the claims of morality, justice, and fair play, to trample ruthlessly on the rights of men who, through no fault of their own, depend for the necessaries of life for themselves and their families on the ancient eū system of this country.

It is not certainly all the Nonconformists who approve of the methods adopted by hon. Gentlemen and their friends, and the farmers in Wales and England are one and all in favour of the Bill. I looked forward on this occasion to the strong support of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt). I do not know why he is not in his place—and I do not know where he is—but his language last year was so kind with regard to a Bill, which was really the same Bill as this, that I certainly thought he would have been here to assist the Government.

> "I will undertake," said the right hon. Gentleman, "to do all I can to assist the Government in passing the Bill, because it contains three valuable principles—payment by the landlord, abolition of distress, and reduction of the tithe when the land will not bear it."

I defy anyone to say these are not the three leading principles of this Bill. I can assure the Government that they have in this matter the whole popular feeling of the farmers at their back; that the landowners, on the whole, are willing to accept the Bill; and that probably the owners of the tithe rent-charge, although they will suffer in some respects by the Bill, will, for the sake of peace and quiet, which above all things they desire, accept it.

(10.55.) MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): I can hardly congratulate the Government upon the Representatives of Welsh opinion among their supporters. It is a very singular fact that no one on the other side of the House is able to express with any authority the opinion of Wales on any question which agitates the Principality. The hon. Member for Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge (Mr. Raikes) can in eloquent terms say what the opinion of the Principality is, but we fail to find any Representatives of a Welsh constituency who supports the statements which those Gentlemen use. I wish to question altogether the axiom laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, and to which he himself does violence in his own Bill, with regard to the nature of the property in tithes. The Authority which, under the Bill, has to deal with the subject of tithes is the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. If the right hon. Gentleman had consulted the history of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, he would have found it was too late in the day to say that the property which belongs to the Church Establishment is not property which can be dealt with by the State. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were constituted by Act of Parliament, and dealt with Church property on the footing of its being national property. They take away the endowments of one diocese or of one parish and transfer them to another. The hon. Member for Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton) does not know the depth of feeling on this subject which exists amongst the Welsh farmers. These men are not, as the hon. Member seems to suppose, in favour of the abolition of tithe on the ground that it is a private debt. They consider it as the misapplication of public property. If I should be asked to describe this Bill, I should say it is merely an attempt to prop up the Establishment in Wales from the outside. I agree that the Church in Wales has done a good religious work; but if the Church desires to have its influence extended, it is not from the outside sources it should seek its strength, but from sources within its own walls. If those who are the devoted members of the Establishment in Wales desire to extend its work let them do their duty to their own Church in the same way as members of other Churches in Wales do their duty to their own religious denominations. If that is done, no doubt considerable influence will be exercised on the religious feeling in Wales. But this is not an attempt to strengthen the Church from the inside; it is an attempt to strengthen the Church from the outside; to strengthen it by means of money which is dragged from the pockets of those who do not believe in the Establishment in Wales as a religious institution. The farmers of Wales raise the objection to tithe because they have a settled conviction that they are paying money which had its origin in national purposes towards a religious institution which only ministers to the religious wants of a small minority of the population. I was very much surprised to hear that the hon. Member for Shropshire (Mr. S. Leighton) had the hardihood to say that the Church in Wales is the strongest religious institution in the Principality. I do not know how he measures strength. [Mr. S. LEIGHTON: By numbers.] There is a different way of measuring strength. I should like him to measure strength in this way, which, I think, would be a fair method: Let him take the support of the Church that is rendered by those who are members of the Church. He will then find that the Church of England in Wales is one of the weakest religious institutions in the Principality. Let him subtract from the revenues of the Church the contributions of those who are not members of the Church—contributions which are forced from them by the law of this country—and he will find that the Church is one of the weakest of the religious institutions in the country. Last year the Postmaster General spoke of the distress of the Welsh clergy, and said it was a scandal. Of course it is. No one denies that; least of all do the Welsh Representatives. But to whom is it a scandal? Is it a scandal to those who do not profess to support the clergy? Is it a scandal to those who do not regard the clergy of the Church of England as their ministers? No, Sir; it is a scandal to those who profess the same religious opinions as the clergy; it is a scandal to those who, being best able to support ministers of religion, fail in their duty and leave it to outsiders to find the means by which the clergymen can live properly. Now, this Bill is very complicated. I admit it has been very carefully prepared; it is very much superior, so far as draftsmanship is concerned, to the Bill of last Session. But, at the same time, its object is easily seen. Its object is not in the least degree to benefit the payer of tithe, but to benefit the owner of tithe. I think the right hon. Gentleman might have explained a little more what he means by the provision as to the appointment of a Receiver. As I understand, it will be competent for the Receiver to manage the farm. What does that mean? Why, the costs of the Receiver will add enormously to the burdens which have to be borne by the tithepayer; and if the Receiver is also to manage the farm, he may borrow money and expend it in management, so that the man in occupation may be kept for years out of the beneficial enjoyment of the holding. Poundage and the costs and expenses of the Receiver and manager will more than double that which the tithepayer was originally expected to pay. And this, it is said by the right hon. Gentleman, is to be a benefit. I do not believe that the ownership of tithe is inimical to the tithepayer. As a rule, tithe owners and tithepayers have that amount of common sense which shows them that they are in fact partners in one concern, and I do not think the tithe owner can agree to a measure which he sees places an additional burden upon the tithepayer as this Bill does. I hope that the Government will profit by the experience of last Session, and withdraw the Bill. The Postmaster General, who stands in the place of a Welsh Secretary, is anxious, I understand, to send a message of peace to Wales. But the right hon. Gentleman must see that there is no message of peace in this measure; but, on the contrary, that there is in it a great element of discord between the tithe owner and tithepayer. The right hon. Gentleman would do well to persuade his Colleagues that this measure will not prove the means of bringing round the people of Wales to favour Establishment. If I were speaking merely as a Party man, I should say I desire nothing better than this Bill; but I am not anxious to speak as a Party man. I am anxious for this question to be settled, but the settlement ought surely to proceed upon the principle that that which is public property ought to be applied to public purposes.

*SIR W. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West): I desire to say a few words on this important question. Any one who has listened attentively to the debate must say that up to this it has run very much in one groove. I should like to remove it from that groove. It has been, in reality, a Welsh debate. I sympathise with those gentlemen who are anxious to state their views with regard to the Church of England in Wales, yet they must remember that this Bill applies to the whole of England. I think no one will deny that my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade has very clearly laid before us that which he intends by the Bill. Let me go back for a moment to ancient history. We had a Tithes Bill in 1887, but it was not pressed to a Division in this House. In that Bill there was 5 per cent. to be paid to the landowners. That was to cover other proposals in the Bill which they thought might be very objectionable to many of the landowners. But that 5 per cent. was cut out of the Bill, and then the Bill itself disappeared from the scene. We then had another Bill. That Bill contained a provision which placed upon landowners a personal responsibility, indeed more than a personal responsibility. If, for instance, you lived in Middlesex and had property in Yorkshire, and the Yorkshire tithe was not paid, the tithe owner could come down on your property in Middlesex and take sufficient to satisfy the tithe in Yorkshire. That was a proposal which no reasonable man would have accepted. I would have fought it to the death. Such a proposal would never have passed into law. After that another unfortunate Bill was brought forward. If the opinions of many gentlemen on this side of the House had been listened to that Bill would not have been pressed so far as it was; but the Bill was pressed on, and then what a change of front took place! Why was the change made? Because my hon. Friend the Member for the Maldon Division of Essex (Mr. C. W. Gray) nearly carried an Amendment embodying the first principles of this Bill. My hon. Friend, therefore, ought to be satisfied with the present measure. The right hon. Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt), who was then leading the Opposition, stated distinctly that the change the Government had made was one which he could absolutely support, and that he believed hon. Members on the Opposition Benches would support the Government in carrying the Bill. That Bill was ruled out of order. The Government, however, profiting by the experience of the past and relying on the fair and reasonable support of the House of Commons, now places before it the provisions which were in the proposed Bill withdrawn last year. I think the Government are right in bringing forward this Bill, and I believe that any fair and reasonable Amendments will be carefully considered by my right hon. Friend in charge of it (Sir M. Hicks Beach). I think my right hon. Friend has done a great service to the House. If there is any man who has suffered from the agricultural depression it is he. I believe he has looked at both sides of the question, and can represent the views of all who are interested in it. A right hon. Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench said he should oppose the Bill on every point. I hope this declaration will strengthen my right hon. Friend in the determination that, as far as the main principles of the measure are concerned, he will adhere steadfastly to them if he really means to carry the Bill at all. There is not a man in the House who would not say it would be a disgrace to a strong Government like this after bringing in a Bill for the fourth time to withdraw it from the consideration of the House on account of the opposition of a few Gentlemen on the opposite side. If they go on boldly I hope they will pass a measure which will settle this question for many years to come. Reference has been made to the disturbances which have gradually sprung up in Wales since 1887. The way to prevent disturbance from growing is to be firm at the commencement. If the Government had been firm, if with a steady and resolute hand they had put down the disturbances they would not have grown at all. I venture to think that the provision with regard to the special rate is one that is in the interests of the landowners as well as the tenants, because they will be able to go to the Assessment Committee and get the absolute sum approved, which sum if less than the tithes, then the tithes will be reduced to that sum, and the tithe owner will have to pay the rates, no rates being charged upon the land. I would suggest to my right hon. Friend that he might go a step further in that direction. We have heard that there are a large number of small holders who suffer tremendously by the present depression. We know that when the tithe commutation took place in 1836 the rates were more than double what they are at present. Who has benefited by the reduction of the rates? Has it not been the tithe owner? If you read the statements made at the time by Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell, you will find they were both agreed that if the price of wheat went down, some re-arrangement ought to be made, and that they went further, and said the object of the commutation of tithe was to enable those who were putting their money into the land, namely, the landlords, to make such great improvements as have been made since the Act of 1836. Then it was said the reason for fixing the payment was that there should be no extraordinary change; that it would be most unfair if an increase of tithe were made on account of the improved cultivation of the land, and, though an enormous change has taken place since the repeal of the Corn Laws, yet it would be dangerous to re-open the fixed basis. We have to deal with it as it stands, and I venture to hope and I believe that the relief, small as it is, will be of service to a large number of people. But I go one step further in regard to the Redemption Clauses. My right hon. Friend has been much criticised upon these, and an hon. Member has said—

> "Whatever you do if you redeem the tithe and get rid of the burden on the land, we shall place some other burden on the land, for that is what we think we ought to do"

But I would like to ask the hon. Member for Leicester about this. He cannot be of that opinion he will not put another shilling on the land for has he not undertaken that if he should have the management of affairs, if he should ever sit there as Prime Minister, he would get an increase of 50 per cent. from the land? I confess I should like to know how he proposes to do it, and if he succeeds I will be his humble disciple. We have heard lately through the elaborate speech of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary how he proposes to deal with tenants in Ireland; and surely if we are to have a redemption scheme worthy of the name, we may urge upon my right hon. Friend, with the assistance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and with the magnificent security of a first charge upon the land, that we might have the money advanced to us at a very much more reasonable rate than that mentioned in the Bill. That is one of the questions I hope my right hon. Friend will take into account; but believing that, upon the whole, he has endeavoured to fulfil the pledge given by the Government last year, and although there are some points in the Bill I do not approve of, and which may be amended, yet still I believe that if my right hon. Friend is only firm and stedfast in his purpose, he will carry this to a successful conclusion, and at the end of the Session we shall have the credit of having placed upon the Statute Book a measure which I venture to hope will settle this difficult and dangerous question of tithe for many years to come.

(11.30.) **Mr. HENEAGE** (Great Grimsby): As one who strongly opposed the Bill of last year, I feel bound to say that I think the present is a very carefully prepared Bill, and one which might, by amendments in Committee, be made a very good measure. The debate so far has been carried on upon two lines; by those who have supported the Bill and mildly criticised it, and others who have dealt with the measure from a Welsh point of view. The arguments of the Welsh Members may be summed up in this, that they would find no fault with the Bill provided it were to include a clause which should disestablish the Church in Wales. Whatever differences of opinion hon. Members may have with regard to the proper use and disposition of the tithe rent-charge, we must all agree that the tithe should be preserved in its integrity for any use to which Parliament may choose hereafter to devote it. That is exactly the principle of the Bill. I am exceedingly glad that the Government propose to relieve the tenants from the payment of the tithe rent-charge. It was the greatest mistake that the tenants ever had to pay it, and it is contrary to the intention of the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. I believe it was brought about by the land agents to save themselves the trouble of making those small payments. In Lincolnshire, Northumberland, and many other counties, on all the large estates the tithe rent-charge is paid by the landlords; but where it is paid by the tenant it is for the convenience of the landlord, and the tenant gets a return for it at the rent audit. I am quite certain the system has been a very bad system, and I think no one who reads the Act of 1836 can fail to see that the idea of the tenant paying the tithe is much deprecated. I am therefore very glad that it is proposed to make payment by the tenant illegal, and we shall get rid of the scandal of a tenant being distrained upon for that which he is not bound to pay or entitled to pay except as a matter of convenience for the landlord, and I believe recovery through the County Court is the proper method to adopt. With regard to the certificate of the Assessment Committee, I agree with my hon. Friend who spoke last that this is a valuable provision of the Bill. It is fair to everybody all round, because land is depreciated in most counties from 22 to 25 per cent., and therefore the tithe owners' charge on the land ought to be reduced by the same amount. But I am not very well pleased that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners should be the Body to administer the Act, because they have a very good character for running up expenses, and a very bad character for expediting business, and I am afraid a great deal of toll will be paid by the clergy for the work transacted for them. In regard to the redemption clauses of the Bill, I should like to ask why it is that when the landlords are unable to pay the capital amount of redemption, they are asked to pay 4 per cent. on mortgage to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, for I find in another part of the Bill that the Tithe Receiver gets $3\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. What becomes of the other five-eighths paid by the landlord? Surely that should not be allowed to fall into the jaws of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Surely it would be better if matters were carried on as now, and that landowners might pay direct to the Tithe Receiver an amount say of $3\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. It would be a saving to landowners and to the tithe receiver, and the only people who would lose by the arrangement would be the officials of the Ecclesiastical Commission, with whom, I confess, I have no sympathy. Then I would call attention to Section 3, Sub-section 1, under which power is given to provide that all lands in the possession of the same owner shall be liable for the tithe due upon part of the land. Now I cannot see why these words should be included. Surely whether a man is a large or a small landowner, or whether his occupancy is small or large, he should be dealt with on the same terms. But under this clause a man might have a large farm, part of which might be of great value, and part very poor land, paying badly, yet the grass land might be made liable and brought under the Receivership for the tithe not paid on the clay land. I make these remarks with a view to assist the Government in the Bill. I cordially support the Bill, and hope that every one who can assist in making it a perfect measure and a benefit to all concerned will vote for the Second Reading.

(11.40.) Mr. PHILIPPS (Lanark, Mid): I have been very much interested in the reasons assigned for supporting the Bill, but most of all by the right hon. Gentleman who told us generally that the Bill was for the benefit of tithe owners and tithepayers; but nine-tenths of his speech was devoted to the Bill as it would affect the people of Wales. Wales was in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman throughout. The President of the Board of Trade has told us of some imaginary opponent of the Bill, whose picture, as the right hon. Baronet drew it, was like Henry VIII. Well Henry VIII. was a Welshman, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that there are still Welshmen who would strike as big blows at the Ecclesiastical Establishment as ever Henry VIII. did. It is plain from the right hon. Gentleman's speech that he has in his mind the interests of tithe owners only. He wants the tithe owners in England to have the same facilities for borrowing money from the taxpayers, as he and his Party are ready to give to the landowners of Ireland. To describe the Bill as a Tenant Farmer's Relief Bill is to describe it quite wrongly. How will the tenant be benefited? If the obligation to pay tithe is shifted on to the landlord, but if the tenant in his turn has to pay the amount to the landlord, how will the tenant be better off than before? When the hon. Member opposite argued that tithe is the property of the Church, I think he ought to have consulted his leaders on the Front Bench. The First Lord has explained, I think, that when he said tithe was national property he did not mean exactly what others did; but the President of the Board of Trade had admitted the same thing.

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: No.

Mr. PHILIPPS: I do not wish to misrepresent the right hon. Gentleman, but I thought he used the expression "national property," though he qualified it with other words.

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: I never used it. What I did say was that the hon. Member for Swansea had described the property as national, but that I did not agree with him.

Mr. DILLWYN: When did I do so?

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: In the terms of the Motion of which the hon. Member gave notice.

Mr. PHILIPPS: I find that the right hon. Gentleman did not use the words "national property," but the words "public property"; so there is not a great distinction. Then the hon. Member for Hants said that he did not wish to be relieved of his own burdens at the expense of the Church. Well, I can assure the hon. Member that the tenant farmers of Wales have no such wish either. They protest against the payment of tithes on public grounds, and not from any notion of private benefit. The agitation in which they have taken part has landed the farmers of Wales in very heavy expenses. Then we had the speech of the noble Lord (Viscount Wolmer), which, I suppose, was directed to showing that he has inherited a legal mind, but really it amounted to no more than the assertion of absurd legal quibbles. Then, from a Lincolnshire Member we had quite a pathetic appeal to the Government to make the thing a little sweeter to tithepayers, for there were 2,000 such among his constituents. And doubtless the Government will do this, and the assistance of the British taxpayer will be asked to lend money at 2¾ per cent. Night after night we have heard taunts in this House of speeches being paid for; but the speech of the hon. Member for Bradford is delivered almost nightly at 30s. and second-class return fare. We have heard the speech often, and I suppose often shall hear it again. Then we had the speech of the hon. Gentleman from Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton). It amused us, coming among some very dull speeches; but who is the authority Prothero he quoted? Is he another of the 30s. speakers? Hon. Members think such allusions are bad form, perhaps, but let them remember this when they use taunts against us on this side. There are four Conservative Members for Wales, but they are not in the House, and they will not dare to speak in support of the Bill, although they may vote for it. The Bill will not put down agitation, which will be carried on by farmers who own their farms. Agitation is not the cause but the effect of a real grievance, and agitation will go on until the Church in Wales is Disestablished.

(11.55.) Debate adjourned till tomorrow.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee).

Clause 1.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Upon this Bill I desire to offer a few observations, general and particular. In the first place——

The CHAIRMAN: This first clause contains only the short title, and I do not think the hon. Member would be in order in discussing the merits of the Bill upon this clause.

Dr. TANNER (Cork, Mid): Seeing that on a recent occasion when this Bill was before us, and at some such an hour as this, the First Lord of the Treasury cut short the discussion with the Closure Motion, and seeing that there is no time now for debate, I trust the right hon. Gentleman will agree to postpone the Bill to afford opportunity for raising the few points that require discussion. In order that this stage may not be hurried through, as the Second Reading was, I move that you now report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.—(*Dr. Tanner*).

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): The other night, in the course of a 10 minutes discussion, I ventured to ask for an explanation which, however, I did not get, and the First Lord stopped all discussion with the Closure. I hope, therefore, the Government will not attempt to press the Bill further now, but will accept the Motion and report Progress.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I have no objection to the Motion, but let me remind the hon. Gentleman that an explanation was given to the effect that, under an arrangement entered into 20 years ago, the Indian Government paid five per cent. on the company's capital, and that payment would continue for a long term of years, unless the Government availed themselves of the right of purchase which the agreement gives them this year. By the exercise of that power the Government will effect an economy of £36,000 a year in Indian expenditure. If the Bill is defeated, the effect will be that the Government of India will pay £36,000 a year more for the entire period of the agreement. However, I consent to the Adjournment now.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I wish to explain that I am opposing the Bill, not from any motives of obstruction, but because I believe the Bill is a mistake financially and in other respects.

It being 12 o'clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

HERRING FISHERY (SCOTLAND) ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 196.)

Bill considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE (PREVENTION) BILL.—(No. 210.)

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 19.

*(12.11.) CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N.): One point appears to have escaped the attention of the Committee, in connection with the clause relating to the method in which penalties shall be recovered before the Court instead of in a summary manner. This Bill is so framed that what are generally meant by contagious diseases are all brought under its operation. Under the Bill there is no clause defining particular diseases, but the Public Health Act, Clause 6, names a certain number of diseases, and the following clause states that the Local Authorities may add to them as many as they choose. Consequently, a particular class of disease, which I need not especially mention, might, if the Local Authority so decided, come under the operation of this Bill, which would constitute a tremendous weapon and enormous power in dealing with these matters. By Clause 132 any Justice of the Peace, acting in and for a district, may direct the detention in hospital of persons suffering from these diseases with a view to preventing the spread of the disorder. Now, that virtually means imprisonment in a hospital; and if the powers under the Bill are taken in the sense to which I have alluded, they legalise a course which ought not to be sanctioned by a Committee of this House without full intention and knowledge of what it is about.

*(12.14.) MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I think the hon. Gentleman has entirely failed to comprehend the purpose and principle of this Act. No extension of the list of diseases can take place without the consent of the Local Government Board; and if the list were extended in an improper manner, that Authority would be summarily called to account. Nothing is further from the intention of those who framed the Act than to extend the list in the direction suggested by the hon. Member.

*CAPTAIN VERNEY: But it may be done.

*(12.15.) MR. POWELL: I have never heard any suggestion of the kind, and feel greatly surprised that such wild observations should be uttered by the hon. Member. I hope that the Bill will be allowed to proceed.

*CAPTAIN VERNEY: I entirely agree with the hon. Member that this was never contemplated; but still it may be done, and that is my reason for bringing the matter before the House.

*(12.16.) MR. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): Will the Local Government Board give us some assurance that this will be made impossible? There may be no intention on the part of the promoters

of the Bill to do this thing, and to bring in these other diseases; but so long as there is any possibility of its being done, it behoves us to guard against it. We have been taken in several times in the past, and we do not wish to be taken in again. Surely the Government or the hon. Member in charge of the Bill can insert words expressly limiting the effect of the measure.

(12.17.) MR. W. H. LONG (Wilts, Devizes): I cannot, in the absence of the President of the Local Government Board, give any such assurance; but I may point out that the list of these infectious diseases cannot be extended except with the consent of the Local Government Board, and that implies that extension cannot be made without the knowledge of Parliament.

*MR. M'LAREN: Why not?

MR. W. H. LONG: All I can say is that I will undertake to lay this matter before the President of the Local Government Board before the Report stage is reached.

(12.19.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): I do not think we can proceed any further. This is too serious a matter to be left merely on the understanding that it is to be dealt with on the Report stage. We must clearly understand that there is no possibility of doubt on this question. Under these circumstances, I move to report Progress.

MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): May I point out that this Amendment is one proposed by the hon. Member for West St. Pancras, and that I had merely proposed it in the absence of the hon. Gentleman. Of course, if there is any objection to it I am quite willing to withdraw it.

(12.21.) MR. H. H. FOWLER: My position is simply this: A difficulty has arisen which the responsible Representative of the Government is not able to clear up. This Bill has been advanced with startling rapidity. The hon. Gentleman in charge of it cannot complain of any delay in putting it forward, and I think it is only due now to the House that we should not proceed any further.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

Mr. M'Laren

TREES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 70.)

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 9, after the word "shall," to insert the words "subject as hereinafter mentioned." —(*Mr. Macartney.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(12.23.) DR. TANNER: I have already explained this matter to the Committee. The hon. Member desires to introduce Amendments which were introduced in the Bill by the House of Lords on a prior occasion, and inasmuch as our constituents decline to accept this Amendment because it will practically emasculate the measure, I must object to further progress being made.

Objection being takento Further Proceeding, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

SMALL HOLDINGS.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Small Holdings be re-appointed to inquire into the facilities which exist for the creation of Small Holdings in Land in Great Britain; whether, either in connection with an improved system of Local Government or otherwise, those facilities may be extended; whether, in recent years, there has been any diminution in the number of Small Owners and Cultivators of Land; and whether there is any evidence to show that such diminution is due to legislation.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Broadhurst, Sir George Campbell, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Jesse Collings, Viscount Curzon, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Sir William Hart Dyke, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Llewellyn, Mr. James William Lowther, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Halley Stewart, and Mr. Angus Sutherland, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That five be the quorum.

Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Small Holdings in 1889, be referred to the Committee.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

by Contract with H.M.'s Government. An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 28th March, 1890.

APPEAL COMMITTEE.

First Report from; read, and agreed to.

EARL ERNE (CLAIM TO VOTE FOR REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND).

Ordered and Directed, That a Certificate be sent by the Clerk of the Parliaments to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland, stating that the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom has reported to the House of Lords that the right of the Earl Erne to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of him the said Lord Chancellor; and that the House of Lords has ordered such Report to be sent to the said Clerk of the Crown in Ireland; and it is hereby also ordered, that the said Report of the said Lord Chancellor be sent to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) BILL.

A Bill to enable women to be elected and to act as County Councillors—was presented by the Lord Chaworth (*E. Meath*); read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 50.)

BILLS OF SALE BILL.

A Bill to exempt certain letters of hypothecation from the operation of the Bills of Sale Act, 1882—was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 51.)

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS BILL. (No. 52.)

A Bill to amend and consolidate the Acts relating to industrial schools in Great Britain:

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS BILL. (No. 53.)

A Bill to amend and consolidate the Acts relating to reformatory schools in Great Britain:

JUVENILE OFFENDERS BILL. (No. 54.)

A Bill to amend the Summary Jurisdiction Acts with respect to the punishment of juvenile offenders:

Were presented by the Viscount Cross; read 1^a; to be printed, and to be read 2^a on Monday the 21st of April next.

TRUST COMPANIES BILL.—(No. 42.)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading, read.

*The Earl of **MORLEY**: My Lords, I had not an opportunity of saying anything upon this Bill when in Committee, and I take this opportunity of expressing my regret that the clause as to carrying on other businesses was altered in the manner in which it was in Committee. The result of that alteration will, I think, be to render the Bill absolutely nugatory. It is evident that no company at present exists which has for its sole business the performance of the offices of executor administrator or Trustee, and I do not think it would be possible to establish a company which should have as its only object the undertaking of those duties. I think if it is desirable to enable companies to act as Trustees or executors, it is essential that these companies should also be permitted to undertake other business of a remunerative character.

Lord **HERSCHELL**: I, of course, agree entirely with all my noble and learned Friend has said. I do not propose to go over the ground again which I traversed when the Bill was in Committee. I cannot think the alteration then made will afford any real protection to the public; because while it empowers such a company only to undertake the performance of the duties of executors and trustees, it in no way limits the investment of its funds by such a company, and does not prevent it involving itself in the very speculative investments which were the ground of objection to companies which undertook not only that business but other businesses as well. The Amendment which I have on the Third Reading is upon Clause 24, which is taken *verbatim* from my noble and learned Friend's Bill relating to Public Trustees, and I have merely made the Amendment to bring it into the final shape which that Bill assumed. It is in line 25, after "of" to insert "any of," and to leave out the words "or of any such persons." Then in line 27 to leave out the words after "bank" and insert words, so that it shall read "that the company or bank shall not be deemed liable by reason of having had notice thereof."

Amendments agreed to.

Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE BILL.—(No. 43.)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, I do not propose at this stage to revive the discussion which took place in Committee upon this Bill, or to ask your Lordships to re-consider it in any way. My proposal to omit certain words, which I will allude to in a moment, was defeated in this House, and, of course, here, where my noble and learned Friend can count upon the big battalions, it would have been useless to divide. But I desire to call your Lordships' attention to the Bill as it stands, because I cannot think it is really appreciated, or that, when appreciated, it can be permitted finally to pass in its present form. The Bill provides that where any property which is subject to any liability, such as shares, on which calls may be made, is vested in the Public Trustee, the Public Trustee shall not be liable to the payment of any such calls. Whatever may be said for limiting the liability of Trustees, I think it ought only to be done under careful safeguards. Here the proposal applies, of course, only to a Public Trustee, and I must invite your Lordships' attention to what will be the effect of the Bill as it at present stands. If the owner of shares in a company, upon which large calls still remain to be paid or can be claimed, thinks fit to vest those shares in the Public Trustee upon trust, we will say for a member of his family, the effect would be that the beneficiary would, under that trust, obtain all the advantages of belonging to the company in the way of receiving dividends in common with all the rest of the shareholders; but should the company go into liquidation, neither the beneficiary nor the Trustee, nor anybody else, will, in respect of those shares, be liable to make a penny of payment towards satisfying the claims of creditors, and, of course, that will have the effect of throwing the whole of the burden upon the other shareholders. Now, this is not merely a question of the liability of Trustees, public or otherwise; it is a question in which every public company and everybody who holds shares in a public company is interested, because, of course, in the event of liquidation or loss, they are all liable; that is to say, if there are debts of the company they will fall to be paid by all the shareholders alike, and if any shareholder is freed from that liability it throws a greater burden upon the others. If you say that the Public Trustee shall not be liable beyond the amount of the property which he holds under the trust, the creditors will still have to be satisfied, and therefore heavier calls will have to be made on the other shareholders. That will be the result of freeing the Public Trustee from liability under this Bill. I cannot think that that is the intention of your Lordships' House, or that it ought to be carried into effect. What reason is there for it? Simply the result will be that if a man makes the Public Trustee his Trustee in regard to shares in a company, he thereby wipes out that portion of the capital of the company. Suppose that the capital of the company is £1,000,000, and a large number of the shares representing that capital are put in the hands of the Public Trustee, the result will be that whereas the capital of that company appears to be £1,000,000, it is, in reality, so much less. That result is brought about simply because one of the shareholders chose to vest his shares in the Public Trustee. It may be said that may not be done to any great extent; but there will be every temptation for people holding shares to do so. Suppose a man vests shares in the Public Trustee for his son's or his daughter's marriage, he will get all the benefit of being a shareholder, and be at the same time freed from all burdens. Your Lordships know there are many prosperous companies who may, nevertheless, get into trouble. Suppose the capital of a company is in £25 shares, on which £5 may have been paid, so that a liability of £20 remains upon them. We will suppose 1,000 of those shares settled, and that the Public Trustee is made Trustee. £5,000 has been paid upon them, and of course that is the amount of the property settled. The company goes into liquidation; the other shareholders can be called upon to the extent of £20 per share on the amount of their shares, but no call can be made upon the 1,000 shares settled in the hands of the Public Trustee, and the result is that that unpaid £20,000 is as much wiped out of the capital of the company by the action of the shareholder investing it in the Public Trustee as if the company had been started with a so much smaller capital. I have spoken only so far of a company being wound up; but I hardly know what is to happen if a company is still a going concern. The Public Trustee is not to be bound to meet a call that is made—can the shares he holds be forfeited? If an ordinary shareholder does not pay his calls, the company can forfeit his shares; but could the company forfeit the shares held by the Public Trustee, who, the Legislature has said, shall not be liable to pay beyond the amount of the property he holds? I think that is a matter which is at least open to grave doubt. I will only add that I have thought it right to call attention to the matter in order that it may be considered elsewhere. Here it is quite hopeless now to expect a consideration of it; but if the Bill passed in its present form I think it will be found hereafter very difficult to justify such legislation. The truth is that the Public Trustee ought not to take shares in trust unless he has ample property in his hands to meet the liability upon them, or gets an indemnity which shall be sufficient to satisfy him that he is secure. No Trustee need hold shares in trust; and it seems to me that if the Public Trustee does so it would be right that the shares he holds should remain subject to the same liability as other shares, because otherwise they are at once, by that difference in liability, in fact deducted from the capital of the company. This is a matter which will not only affect future transactions, but will affect existing companies, which may be in that way deprived of part of their share capital in some cases, and in others have to throw greater burdens upon their other shareholders.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I do not desire to argue the question over again; but it seems to me that my noble and learned Friend entirely forgets the difference between the positions of the Public Trustee and an ordinary Trustee. Unless some such provision as this were incorporated in the Bill, the Public Trustee could never accept a trusteeship or executorship which involved taking over shares. The extent to which he will be liable is the full amount of the trust property, and no more. Being only a public official and not a private Trustee, there is an entire difference between his position and that of an ordinary Trustee. Practically, the effect of the alteration which my noble and learned Friend desires to make would prevent the Public Trustee ever undertaking any trust or executorship in which there were shares at all; and I hope your Lordships will not allow the effect of the measure to be defeated by altering this excellent provision, as it seems to me, for limiting the liability of the Public Trustee.

*THE EARL OF MORLEY: I would venture to suggest that, if it is desirable to relieve the Public Trustee from all liabilities in respect of shares, it would be a simpler plan to prohibit the Public Trustee from holding any but fully paid-up shares. I confess it seems to me that my noble and learned Friend behind me has made a very strong point in pointing out the unfairness with which companies would be treated under such a Bill as this.

Bill read 3^a (according to order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

IRELAND—THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ACT, 1888.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, the Lord President of the Council and the Lord Privy Seal yesterday, on behalf of the Government, read quite correctly the words of two Standing Orders. I naturally, feeling that I was responsible, and being perfectly aware that your Lordships have a right to enforce any Standing Order, immediately gave way, and I took the course which was suggested by those two noble Lords. My only compensation at the time was that I thought it would call even a little more attention than would otherwise have been paid to the objections which a small number of Members of this House desire to record, and whose example it was just possible a larger number might follow. Upon further inquiry, I find that there was no error committed at all yesterday. That entirely relieves me, and I may state now what happened. The chief officer at our Table, with that courtesy with which he always assists Peers on both sides of the House, undertook to put the notice in exact form. He advised that some notice should be given, and those were the words which he adopted. I have here a list, with which I need not trouble your Lordships, of instances during the last seven or eight years, where Motions of this kind have been made, absolutely without any notice at all, and therefore, if notice had been given in the way proposed, it would have been an innovation, and contrary to the practice of your Lordships' House. I do not, in the slightest degree, retire from the position I then took.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Lord KNUTSFORD): I thought it was contrary to the Standing Orders.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN): There is one question which I would like to ask the noble Earl, whether he is now alluding to the first or second of his Motions? The noble Earl will remember that he has made two Motions. The first Motion is now for the suspension of the Standing Order.

EARL GRANVILLE: I am talking of the objection which was raised yesterday to my question proceeding without notice previously given of the suspension of the Standing Order. Upon that, I say at once it is quite clear that any Peer has a right to say the Standing Orders shall be carried out to the letter; but that the constant practice has been, and the authorities are not aware of any single exception to it, that such permission has been given to Members of the House without any notice whatever. Therefore, what I propose now to do with regard to the first Motion is to ask your Lordships to do exactly what the Lord President of the Council and the Lord Privy Seal requested should be done. My second Motion is of a different sort. It is that owing to a misunderstanding, and to a change having taken place in the practice of the House, the names of some Lords, who yesterday, under a misapprehension, signed the Protest, be permitted to stand. I think, considering that it is an innovation which your Lordships have introduced into our practice, and considering the alacrity which I showed to meet the wishes of the House, it would only be in cognisance with the usual good feeling of the House if that permission were given.

Moved, "That Standing Order No. XXXV. be dispensed with."—(*The Earl Granville.*)

*THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: My Lords, I am quite sure that the noble Earl will understand it is not with any desire to be discourteous to him that I say I hope you will not accede to the Motion he has made. The Standing Orders of your Lordships' House are not, as it seems to me, made to be broken. They are, I think, of some value; and if your Lordships accede to this Motion, all that noble Lords need do on another occasion when they wish to evade them will be to get up and move their suspension. If that is so I fail to see what use Standing Orders can be. I recollect the noble and learned Lord Herschell saying on one occasion that the difference between the Standing Orders of the House of Commons and those of your Lordships' House is chiefly this—

> "That those of the House of Commons are not so severe, but they are always in force; whereas those of your Lordships' House, though much more severe, are very seldom enforced."

No doubt the Government may from time to time move the suspension of the Standing Orders in order to enable Bills to pass quickly through the House during the Session. That is a privilege which I think everybody will agree that Governments of whatever shade politically ought to possess. There may be cases where it is necessary to exercise that privilege; but in this instance, neither yesterday nor to-day, has the noble Earl given your Lordships a single reason for suspending the Standing Orders. He has now explained why he did not give notice of his Motion in the form which was suggested by Lord Cranbrook and Lord Cadogan; but why your Lordships should allow the Standing Orders to be suspended and should accede to the proposal he makes for allowing those noble Lords, some of whom were not present at the debate at all, and some of whom, I am told, were not even in England, to sign this Protest, he has not given a single reason. I need only refer to Sir Erskine

May's *Parliamentary Practice* to show what the custom of your Lordships' House is with regard to these Protests. He says this—

> "Sometimes leave is given to Lords to enter Protests against any vote of the House some time after the period limited by the Standing Order."

And that is part of the proposal of the noble Earl. I have looked back to see what other occasions there were of this kind: they are not numerous, but there were undoubtedly two upon the Irish Church Bill. Then he says—

> "By the usage of the House of Lords the privilege of entering a Protest is restricted to those Lords who were present and voted when the question to which they desire to express their dissent was put; but leave is sometimes given to Lords to sign the Protest of another Peer, although they were not present when the question was put."

But not a word about their not being present when the debate took place, and I can find no instance of any Peer being allowed to sign a Protest who was not present during the debate.

Earl GRANVILLE: Before the noble Earl proceeds I should like to call his attention to a few instances. On the 21st July, 1882, without any notice of Motion whatever being placed on the Paper, it was ordered that Lord Stratheden and Campbell be allowed to sign a Protest, and "that he sign the same before the rising this day." This Protest was entered and signed by, among others, Lord De L'Isle and Dudley, who was not present that day. Then, upon the Army Discipline Bill, in 1881, it was ordered that Lord Stewart of Garlies have leave to enter a Protest "before 2 o'clock to-morrow," he and such Lords as desired; and the Protest was entered and signed by, among others, Lord Hylton and Lord Waveney, who were not present. I really do not think I ought to trouble your Lordships by going through all the precedents which I have here.

*The Earl of MILLTOWN: This is rather a long interruption, and I think it would have been better if the noble Earl had given those precedents to the House when he made his Motion; but I do not gather from them that the Peers mentioned were not present at the debates.

Earl GRANVILLE: Yes: none of them were present.

*The Earl of MILLTOWN: However that may be, I will presently call attention to an authority to whom I think some of your Lordships, at all events, will pay respect—Lord Brougham—showing that this is not the practice of the House. In 1823 the Duke of Somerset, who had not voted on the question, nevertheless protested, and upon Motion, he having been present at the debate, though he had not voted, the Protest was allowed to stand on the Journals; but that was an extremely exceptional case, and was made dependent on the fact that though he had not voted he was present at the debate and had then protested against the Motion. Now some of these noble Lords were not present at the debate. Then there is reported in *Hansard* another occasion which occurred in this House on the 16th July, 1846. That instance was with regard to a Protest against the Corn Importation Bill. On that occasion the Earl of Radnor was allowed to call their Lordships' attention to a question of some importance as he conceived. He alluded to the Protest of certain noble Lords against the Third Reading. That Protest was signed by 93 Peers; and he always understood that only those Peers who were present could enter their protest, and that was a salutary rule. He was present when the question was put, and he denied that more than one-third of those Peers were present.

> "It appeared on an examination of the Journals of the House that 10 or 12 Peers had put their names to the Protest against the Third Reading of the Corn Importation Bill, who were not in the House during any part of the discussion of that measure. He (the Earl of Radnor) was not desirous that any Peer who wished to have his name handed down to posterity as professing the opinions expressed in that Protest should be deprived of that honour; but he thought that, under the circumstances he had stated, it was a matter for their Lordships' consideration, and he would leave the House to deal with it as it thought proper. He found, on comparing the number of Peers in attendance on the discussion of the Bill with the number of names affixed to the Protest, that the names of 10 or 12 Peers who were not present at the time were appended to that Protest. Now, if their Lordships overlooked the first objection, he hardly thought they would overlook the second; because the inference would be that any Peer, at any time, whether he took part in the discussion or not, might come down and protest against it, even although his arguments and reasons had been refuted in the course of the debate."

Upon that occasion Lord Brougham, an authority, I think, as I have already said, to whom your Lordships will pay some attention, said that he conceived his noble Friends had done great service by calling attention to this irregularity, which he believed was no doubt unintentional, and arose from those noble Lords not having attended to the Rule of the House. After what I have ventured to say to your Lordships, I think you will see that the irregularity in this case cannot have arisen from that cause, and the Rule is, undoubtedly, that no person who was not present could protest. He lays that down without reservation, and he concludes—

> "It was not so in the Irish Parliament, for in the Irish Parliament they could vote by proxy and protest by proxy."

But clearly, where that is not done in the Parliament of the United Kingdom, this cannot be done. Now, my Lords, I will ask whether we are, for no reason whatever, to abolish that undoubted custom of Parliament in favour of these noble Lords, some of whom I am credibly informed were not even in England when the debate took place, and one of whom has not yet even taken his seat in this House. If that noble Lord had been foolish enough to gratify the noble Earl by signing this Protest, he would have rendered himself liable to a penalty of £500.

*THE EARL OF MORLEY: I should like to say a few words on the question of procedure in reference to the Standing Orders of this House. It appears to me that two questions have been somewhat confused in this discussion: the first is whether Peers have ever been allowed to sign a Protest, not having been present at the debate, and the second is the manner in which that leave has been given. I believe my noble Friend behind me (Lord Granville) is perfectly right in stating that Peers have been allowed to sign such Protests; but the method by which that leave has been given has been to enter it simply on the Minutes, without bringing it before the House at all. In this case the question of suspending the Standing Orders did not arise at all. When the question is brought before the House, as it was by my noble Friend yesterday, the question of the Standing Orders at once arises. There, again, my noble Friend opposite (Lord Cadogan) was right in saying that notice should be given before Standing Orders are suspended; and I think your Lordships will agree with me that there is no case in which it is of so much importance that notice should be given as the suspension of Standing Orders. Under these circumstances, it seems to me the noble Earl is now quite in order, and if the noble Lord goes to a Division I shall certainly vote with him.

THE EARL OF FEVERSHAM: I think the course we are asked to take is rather an unusual one. We are asked to suspend the Standing Orders in order to relieve certain noble Lords who were not present during the debate and enable them to enter this Protest. Why are we to be asked to act contrary to the Standing Orders of this House? What is the intention of this Standing Order? It says—

> "Such Lords as shall make protestations or enter their dissents to any votes of this House, as they have a right to do, without asking leave of the House, either with or without their reasons, shall cause their protestation or dissents to be entered into the Clerk's Book the next sitting-day of this House, before the hour of 2 o'clock, otherwise the same shall not be entered, and shall sign the same before the rising of the House the same day."

Now the debate took place this day a week ago, and the Protest was not entered in the Clerk's Book before 2 o'clock of the next day of the House sitting: on the contrary, I believe it was not entered until Tuesday week, and the noble Lords did not sign on that same day. What was the object of this Standing Order? It was, I apprehend, to ensure that noble Lords should be present at the debate, or should be, at all events, attending in Parliament. Of course, the Protest could not be drawn up until the result of the debate was known; but the Rule points out that the Protest shall be entered on the very next day of the sitting of the House, and shall be signed the same day, that is to say, the very next day afterwards. We are now asked to say that this Rule shall be suspended nearly a week after the debate occurred, and in favour of noble Lords who were not, in some instances, as the noble Earl has stated, even present. He has stated that they were to have signed on the morrow, and he now asks us to suspend this Rule in order that these noble Lords shall sign it. I think it is a very irregular course, and therefore I ask your Lordships not to assent to it.

LORD HERSCHELL: I should like to call attention to a precedent in this matter. On the 7th April, 1881, on the occasion of the Third Reading of the Army Discipline Bill, a Protest was entered nearly a month afterwards. On the 5th May it was ordered that Lord Stewart of Garlies should have leave to sign a Protest. The Protest was entered accordingly, and was signed by several noble Lords who had not been present.

LORD KNUTSFORD: The Easter holidays may have had something to do with it.

EARL CADOGAN: As the noble Lord has mentioned my name in connection with the proceedings of yesterday I will take this opportunity of stating that it was far from my intention either to act with discourtesy towards the noble Earl or to take advantage of the forms of the House to obstruct the Motion which he then made. But I would remind your Lordships that in proceedings yesterday two Motions were made by the noble Earl. First, there was a Motion brought forward contrary to one of the Standing Orders of this House, without any notice to suspend that Standing Order for the purpose of the Motion; and the second was a Motion to suspend the Standing Order at once without any notice. I felt that the last state of the noble Earl was worse than the first; because however inadvisable it was for the noble Earl to take the course of moving in opposition to a Standing Order, as he did in his first Motion, at all events it might be said that he gave notice of that Motion; but the Motion for the suspension of the Standing Order which he subsequently made was given without any notice whatever. I quite agree that the practice of this House with reference to matters of order is at all times lax, and especially so in comparison with the practice of the other House. I cannot say that I regret that laxity; but, at the same time, I am bound to remind the House that it is—and I speak subject to correction—very unusual to move a suspension of Standing Orders without notice.

EARL GRANVILLE: Certainly; we are all agreed about that.

EARL CADOGAN: I think the noble Earl will agree that it is not only an unusual but an extremely undesirable course. It was for that reason that I ventured to protest yesterday against the course which the noble Earl took. With reference to the Motion which he has this day placed upon the Paper, it is not, in my opinion, a matter for Government to decide; it is a question which the House must decide for themselves. I venture to think that perhaps too much importance and too much stress has been laid upon this Protest, of which we have now heard so much; and, for my own part, I can only say that if my noble Friend behind me goes to a Division I shall deem it my duty to vote with the noble Earl opposite, and in saying that I believe I am expressing the opinion of my Colleagues who sit on the same Bench with me. I have risen chiefly to explain to the noble Earl the reasons for the course I took yesterday, and to explain that I shall not be prepared, in case of a Division, to vote against him.

*EARL FORTESCUE: It seems obvious, notwithstanding the precedents which have been cited, that a blot is often not hit until the matter raising the question has been brought conspicuously into notice; but I think it is a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* with regard to the privilege of signing a Protest which is to be preserved to these noble Lords, of whom I am told one is not in England and others heard not a word of the debate, to enter a week afterwards their names on the Protest. No doubt, in times past, very remarkable Protests have been made and signed by men of great eminence; but every argument that applied to the disuse of the practice of giving proxies, which your Lordships agreed to within my recollection as being one that was unseemly, seems to me, at least, as applicable to the signing of Protests by absentees a week after the debate has taken place. Whether the privilege of signing Protests is worth maintaining I do not know: I have no very strong opinion on the subject; but, I do say that if ever there was a *reductio ad absurdum* of a practice I think we have had a sample of it to-day, and therefore I shall vote against the Motion of the noble Earl. I think its effect would be to abolish practically the signing of Protests incidentally and in an ignominious way.

On Question, their Lordships divided:—Contents 34; Not Contents 23.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Moved, "That the following Lords be at liberty to sign, before the rising of the House for the Easter Recess, the Protest entered against the Resolution of the House of Friday 21st March, although their Lordships were not present when the question was put:—

M. Breadalbane.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Ashburnham.
L. Camoys.
L. Wentworth.
L. Vernon.
L. Thurlow.
L. Leigh.
L. Acton.
L. Aberdare.
L. Hothfield.
L. Northbourne.
L. Hobhouse.
L. Burton.
L. Hamilton of Dalzell
L. Thring.

And that the names of

V. Hampden,
L. Coleridge,
L. Kensington,

who signed yesterday (27th March) under a misapprehension, be permitted to stand (*Earl Granville*); agreed to."

LIGHT RAILWAYS (IRELAND) ACT, 1889.

*THE EARL OF LEITRIM: My Lords, before proceeding with my Motion, I should desire to give notice that as soon as possible after Easter I will introduce a Bill to amend the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1889. With regard to the application of the Light Railways' Act to Ireland generally, I need make no explanatory statement as to my reasons for bringing forward this Motion. As far as it applies locally, and as far as my Motion applies to the Grand Jury of the County of Donegal, I should like to state what steps I have taken before introducing this Motion to your Lordships. I have given private notice to the foreman of the Grand Jury, to the mover of the resolution of the Grand Jury, with reference to the Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy Line, to the Duke of Abercorn, who was foreman of the Grand Jury of Donegal for many years; I have put notices in the county papers, and I convened a meeting in the district to which the second part of my Motion refers in the County of Donegal, through which the Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy Line would run. I have circulated among your Lordships a report of what took place at that meeting and it should be in your hands. I know it was in the hands of many of your Lordships this morning. I desire, as far as possible, to deal with general principles, and also to avoid, as far as possible, all names of individuals or of places. My Lords, taxation without representation stinks in the nostrils of taxpayers of the United Kingdom; but in the case of the Tramways of Ireland Act, the pill was gilded with the grant of £1,250,000 from the Treasury, and it was shipped to Ireland as a remedy for the congested districts. I should like, before I pass on, to say something about the definitions which have been given of what are called "congested districts." I have never seen any intelligible definition of what a congested district is. The Commissioners under the Tramways Act asked some of the witnesses what their idea of a congested district was, and one witness would say that it was—

> "A district in which there were a great number of people;"

another gentleman would say that—

> "The number of acres to the unit of population might represent what would be a congested district."

But when tested, I find that that definition does not work at all; on the contrary, it gives exactly the inverse ratio: that is to say, that in these congested districts large areas exist per unit of population, but the land is worth nothing. It may be worth 6d. or 1s., sometimes nothing an acre, for it is nothing but stones and rocks. Therefore, that will not work. Another gentleman, the foreman of the Grand Jury, seems to have endeavoured to define a congested district by a negative process. He says—

> "We have the most civilised district in the county, and we are seven miles from the nearest railway, and no chance of getting any nearer."

A civilised district appears to be his idea of what is not a congested district. The writer of a letter to a newspaper from the Parish of Rossgull takes the trouble to answer that definition, and he says that it would be curious and interesting to know by what criterion this gentleman judges the different degrees of civilisation. Do they, in his district, all use tooth-brushes, or do they wipe their noses with pocket-handkerchiefs, or have they reached that stage which a writer of note says is characteristic of the highest culture—"Do they take jam with their mutton?" I do not think, my Lords, that one will work any way. But I will endeavour to give you my idea of a congested district. My definition of a congested district is this: that the degree to which a district is congested may be estimated by the proportion that the population of a given area bears to the valuation of that area in pounds sterling. I have tested it, and I should like to give a few examples to illustrate it in the County of Donegal. I have taken the parish as my area. Of course, you can apply it to electoral divisions; you can apply it to a Petty Session district, or a Union, or any other district you choose; I have taken the parish. Now, the most congested district in the County of Donegal is what is called the Rosses, that is to say, the parish of Templecroome, and the population there is just three and a half times the valuation. The next are the parishes of Lettermacward and Tullahobegley, and there the population is two and a half times the valuation; and so it goes on until you get down to the valuation and population on a par, when it goes on until the valuation exceeds the population, and there we find a healthy and prosperous state of things. Now, my Lords, coming to the working of the Tramways Act; the defect in the Act, as far as I have been able to lay my finger upon it, seems to be that the congested districts must in every case make themselves responsible for the whole of the working expenses of these lines. I desire to point out to your Lordships the very serious and grave danger that I foresee, and that is that in certain cases this pill will leave such a nauseous after-taste that the patient will vomit. In other words, the congested district will turn upon the political physician, who will have produced an excretion which will have germinated into a white elephant, the burden of the working expenses will be greater than the relief to the taxpayers. The next defect that I would refer to in the working of the Act is this, as I understand it: The Board of Works have decided that no new lines should be scheduled for the Summer Assizes. That, in my opinion, would be a very wise policy; but I differ with the Board as to what may be considered new lines of railway. I hold that where the Board of Works have provisionally allocated a certain sum to reach a certain objective point, a deviation or entirely new method of reaching that objective point should not be considered a new line, but should be investigated between this and the Summer Assizes, and have its merits weighed against any alternative route that may have been scheduled. Let me illustrate this. Point Z is your objective point in a congested district, and P is a terminus of an existing line. A sum of, say, £200,000 has been provisionally allocated for a line from P to Z. But it is now discovered that A is really your base, and that a line from A through P to Z, your objective point —that is to say, from your base to your objective point—would be 10 miles longer, and therefore at £5,000 per mile would cost £50,000 more than a line from A, your base, through a point Q, to Z. That is to say, line A P Z would be 10 miles longer than A Q Z; and supposing you can show that there are existing communications from A to Q, as well as from A to P, why not make this line, which is 10 miles shorter, and connect with existing communications from A to Q? Why not make this bit of line from Q to Z? Supposing, also, that that line would better open up the congested districts; supposing that that shorter line was supported by a large and representative body of the ratepayers, I ask would it be wise, would it be businesslike, would it be politic, to treat such a line as a new line and refuse to schedule it? I do pray the Government not to allow such red-tape notions to prevail. Other advantages may also be derived from the shorter line—there would be reduction in working expenses, and reduction in the rates per mile; there may be even lower rates from A to Q than there are from A to P. All those considerations may, I say, if such a line were scheduled, be then taken into consideration by the Commissioners and be duly weighed, and thus you will get the best value for your money, or whatever part of the £1,250,000 you are granting from the Treasury. There might be a further advantage in this shorter line. £200,000 was the sum which I stated might be the full amount required to construct the line; £50,000 would be saved by the 10 miles at £5,000 a mile, and if that £50,000 were placed to a reserve fund for that line, it might be applied to meet one of the very great defects of the working of this Tramways Bill, that is to say, it might be applied towards defraying the deficit in the working expenses. A short one-clause amending Bill might be necessary, but see what you would save! You would save a considerable amount of taxation upon a congested district which already is struggling to live. Those are the remarks I desire to make to your Lordships as far as the Act may be applicable to the whole of Ireland. In regard to the latter part of my Motion, I desire to call attention particularly to the resolution of the Grand Jury of the County of Donegal, with reference to the Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy line. I should like to read to the House the resolution of the Grand Jury, or that part of it, at all events, which says—

> "And owing to the ratepayers and the Grand Jury unanimously condemning the deviation recommended by the Board of Works,"

and so on. Now, to state that thousands and thousands of ratepayers were unanimous seems to me absurd on the face of it; but was that statement warranted by facts? The mover of the resolution was a land agent on the Grand Jury; and at the time he framed the resolution he had in his possession a letter from one of the largest cesspayers in the district, which said this—

> "I do not think the lines proposed interest Milford or Mulroy at all; nobody in these parts cares in the least which of the proposed routes is adopted. Of course, if taxation is proposed on these districts they will be very much interested, and I think you will find they will be to a man against either route."

That letter was in the possession of the mover of the resolution, which says that the ratepayers were in favour of the route that was condemned in that letter, and the writer of that letter, I think, made good his case, for at the public meeting which I have already referred to, this resolution was adopted—

> "That this meeting regrets that the Grand Jury should have resolved that the ratepayers are unanimous in condemning the deviation recommended by the Board of Works. That, believing this meeting to be representative of £20,000 of the £48,000 proposed to be taxed in the barony of Kilmacrenan, we desire to support the Commissioners of the Board of Works in their deviation from Creeslough *viâ* Carrigart to Milford, and we protest against the Grand Jury resolving that the Letterkenny and Gweedore scheme met with the approval of the ratepayers proposed to be taxed."

The Earl of Leitrim

Now, my Lords, that meeting was a public meeting, and was in every way representative. Land-owners, priests, parsons, ministers, doctors and the masses, were all represented there, and what took place has been fully reported in the county papers. I have circulated it to your Lordships this morning. Three other resolutions were passed, but I will only trouble the House with one more. One was praying the Government to send Commissioners to hold an inquiry in Milford, so that the cesspayers in these districts may have the same opportunity of expressing their opinions as has been granted to Letterkenny, Dunfanaghy, Bunbeg, places all on one side of the barony. Another resolution was praying that the line which I have sketched by the letters A Q Z should be scheduled and inquired into on its merits. Now, my Lords, I would only make further one or two short references to the Grand Jury, and I desire to do so with every courtesy that I can. In the first place, the Grand Jury was summoned by the High Sheriff, who was a promoter of the line that was disapproved of by the Commissioners, and which the Grand Jury appear to have adopted. I do not think the High Sheriff should have acted as a promoter; but I believe that it was an unintentional blunder. I do not wish to imply that he packed the jury in any way, I merely mention it as a fact. The mover of the resolution was also a promoter of a line opposing the Commissioners' line; and in promoting his line he used, as he had a perfect right to do, every technical means that his skill could devise to impede the advantages of this Act in the district in which this great meeting which I have spoken of was held. In taking that course he was endeavouring to secure his own interests and the interests of his neighbourhood as he had a perfect right to do; but when he carried his promoters' tactics into the Grand Jury, I think he committed a very grave and serious error of judgment; and I would ask your Lordships, who are familiar with the practice of magistrates, whether we have not got precedents against such a course? Take the Bench, or take first of all your own Parliamentary Committees. I apprehend that the Grand Jury is, as nearly as possible, analagous in the work it has to preform on this occasion to your Parliamentary Committees. Would it be allowed for a moment that a Peer or Member of the other House should be deeply interested in promoting a line, and yet should be sitting upon one of your Parliamentary Committees? I apprehend not, my Lords. Parliament has, to a certain extent, lost control over the working of this Light Railways Act by committing it to the Grand Jury. We have no control over the Grand Jury, and I am not aware that there is any Executive control in any way over the Grand Jury. The Grand Jury which acted in this case is, so to speak, dead. The matter will possibly be dealt with again by the same Grand Jury, but not necessarily so, at the Summer Assizes. Therefore it is, my Lords, that I have endeavoured to influence the great voice of public opinion in this matter, so that it shall not be possible for a promoter to act in the face of public opinion as a judge in his own cause. I fear the Grand Jury have not risen to the occasion. Parliament has confided to them a great responsibility, and I trust that some good may come at the Summer Assizes from this Motion. Before I sit down I should like to say that I think the Government should exercise the greatest supervision that is possible over the administration of this, as I believe, great healing measure. My desire is that it should reach not merely the homes, but that it should reach the hearts of the people in the congested districts. I desire to move that the Report and the Evidence taken before the Commissioners be laid upon the Table.

Moved—

"That the Report of the Commissioners and the Evidence taken before them, under the Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889, with reference to the Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy Line be laid upon the Table."—(The Lord Clements, *E. Leitrim.*)

EARL CADOGAN: My Lords, I think the House will hardly wish me to follow my noble Friend into all the subjects upon which he has touched in his, if he will forgive me for saying so, discursive speech. I think it would hardly assist us in arriving at a conclusion upon the question he has raised if I were to discuss with him what is the real meaning of the term "congested districts." No doubt that is a matter which it is somewhat difficult to explain to the satisfaction of all; and, as I understand, he merely alluded to the congested districts, because he considered that the Light Railways Act of the Government, was intended, to some extent at all events, to benefit those districts. Therefore, I do not think I need allude any further to that matter. But, my Lords, the noble Earl made some general remarks upon the working of the Light Railways Act, and he came after a time to the discussion of the particular case to which I think he intended in the main to direct the attention of the House.

*THE EARL OF LEITRIM: No; to its working.

EARL CADOGAN: The noble Earl gave as an instance certain railways, the points of which he defined by letters of the alphabet, and in a later portion of his speech he reminded us that those letters of the alphabet which he had previously named stood in reality for two places which he has named in the notice of his question. Therefore, I thought I was justified in imagining that the real object of my noble Friend was to call attention to the particular railway in which I believe he has an interest. He has called attention specially to the constitution of the Grand Jury, whose duty it was to decide upon the railway which is mentioned in the notice paper, and he referred to one of the members of that Grand Jury, who was personally, to a large extent, as I understood, interested in the alternative line which at that time was discussed; and he told us that, in his opinion, it was exceedingly improper that a man should in such an inquiry as that be a judge in his own cause, and should be called upon to decide a question in which he had a large pecuniary interest. I believe that is the argument really of my noble Friend. I cannot, of course, for one moment differ from my noble Friend's view in that matter; but I think he will admit it is not one in which Her Majesty's Government are competent to interfere. Nobody knows better than my noble Friend that the Government have nothing to do with the striking of a Grand Jury. There is no power even of challenging members of a Grand Jury; and it is impossible for the Government, in the review which they must ultimately make of these proceedings, to take into account the personal predilections or circumstances of any persons who serve upon the Grand Jury. Therefore, I am afraid to that extent I cannot offer my noble Friend any satisfaction. But I think perhaps the House will allow me, as the noble Earl has alluded to the general working of the Act, to state, in a few words, for the benefit of those who may not understand the matter as well as my noble Friend does, what has been the course adopted in deciding upon the various lines which are to be carried out under the Act. The several schemes which have been brought to the attention of the Government were sent to the Commissioners of Public Works on the 2nd September, and further Memorials were forwarded to the Commissioners as they were received. A notice was issued on the 25th October calling upon persons interested in any lines who had not already submitted Memorials or Statements to send them in before November 1. A list of lines to be scheduled was subsequently made out and embodied in an Order in Council passed on November 1. Immediately on receipt of the plans from the promoters of the several schemes the Board of Works summoned the several persons selected to make the public inquiries to a conference, when the most minute and detailed instructions were given to them as to the manner in which they should conduct their inquiries, and the nature of the Report to be furnished thereon. On January 6 formal appointments were issued to the several Inspectors to hold the inquiries, as set forth in an advertisement notice, which was published in the Local as well as in the Metropolitan papers, and all the plans and other documentary information furnished by the promoters, in accordance with instructions, were transmitted to the several Inspectors, with a request that their Report should be handed in not later than February 17, in order to enable the Board to complete their communications with the Treasury, and have the cases laid before the Grand Juries of the several counties concerned at the approaching Spring Assizes. They were also furnished with special maps showing the baronies and electoral divisions of the scheduled districts, and the fishery piers and harbours therein, together with statistics of population, taxation, and other matters bearing upon the subject of their inquiries. The last of the public inquiries, which were of a most exhaustive character, was closed on February 3. The Board of Works subsequently communicated to the promoters the result of the inquiries. But they have not yet furnished a General Report to the Government, who are, therefore, not yet in a position to come to a final decision in the matter. Therefore, I think my noble Friend will see that inasmuch as the Government have not yet received the General Report, it is impossible for them to deal piecemeal with one Report at a time from the different districts. It is quite obvious that if my noble Friend succeeded in inducing the Government to discuss with him this particular proposal with regard to his district, other noble Lords who are interested in other parts of Ireland will feel themselves entitled to call in question the decisions of the Grand Juries throughout the country. I think the noble Lord will see that it is impossible for the Government to encourage that method of procedure. He has also told us that there were no possible means of revision or control over the proceedings of the Grand Jury. I think in that he was inaccurate.

*The Earl of LEITRIM: No; the noble Earl is referring, I suppose, to the Treasury?

Earl CADOGAN: At all events, if what is done does not meet with the approval of the Lord President in Council there is further power given in that respect. Under those circumstances, I hope my noble Friend will not be dissatisfied when I say that we are unable to lay this particular Report to which he alludes, with the evidence relating to it, on the Table of the House; but I can assure him that as soon as the Government have received the Reports from all the various districts, information relative to them all will be laid before Parliament.

*The Earl of LEITRIM: My Lords, the statement of the noble Earl is entirely satisfactory to me. It is just what I desired. I may say that the concluding part of the Motion was really formal in order to afford me an opportunity of speaking in reply. My speech was directed, perhaps, quite as much outside this House as to Her Majesty's Government, and I will not trouble your Lordships, therefore, with any further remarks.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

HERRING FISHERY (SCOTLAND) ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 55.)

House adjourned at Six o'clock, till To-morrow, Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 28th March, 1890.

NATIONAL DEBT.

Return ordered—

"Showing at the close of each financial year, from 1835-6 to 1889-90, both inclusive, the aggregate Gross Liabilities of the State as represented by the Nominal Funded Debt, estimated Capital Value of Terminable Annuities, Unfunded Debt, and other Liabilities in respect of Debt, the estimated Assets, and the aggregate Net Liabilities, also the Exchequer Balances; and, showing at the close of each financial year, from 1835-6 to 1889-90, both inclusive, the Gross and Net Expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund on account of the National Debt, and other payments in respect of Debt."—(*Sir W. Harcourt.*)

EAST INDIA (CRAWFORD CASE.)

Address for—

"Copies of, or Extracts from, Correspondence relating to Memorials from Members of the Civil Service as to the Mamlutdars incriminated in the Crawford Case."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following Fifteen Members in respect of the Bankruptcy Bill: Mr. T. H. Bolton, Mr. Caine, Mr. J. A. Campbell, Mr. Chance, Mr. Handel Cossham, Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. H. H. Fowler, Mr. Gedge, Mr. Haldane, Sir E. Harland, Colonel Hill, Mr. Keily, Sir Joseph M'Kenna, Mr. J. Lloyd Morgan, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Report to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS.

MINUTE OF LORD DUFFERIN OF 6TH NOVEMBER, 1888.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he will lay upon the Table the whole of the Minute of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, as Viceroy and Governor General of India, dated 6th November, 1888, portions of which Minute have been already presented to Parliament?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): No, Sir; in view of the confidential nature of the circumstances, the Secretary of State cannot lay the Minute upon the Table.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): May I ask whether the object with which this Paper has been asked for both in this and the other House, and the object with which it was granted, was not to communicate to the House the views of the Governor General and other Indian Authorities?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am unable to follow the argument of the hon. Gentleman; but speaking upon the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, I am prepared to say that it is not in the public interests that this Paper should be given.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the whole of this Minute has been printed in India, and that the withholding of it on the part of the Government may place in an unfortunate position the discussion which is likely to arise upon the Indian Council Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I think it is possible that by a serious breach of confidence on the part of some one in the Public Service, what purports to be the Minute may have been given; but that would not justify me, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, in laying the Paper on the Table.

THE LATE MAHARAJA SCINDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the telegram of the Governor of India, on the 19th June, 1886, to the late Maharaja Scindia, was in reply to the dying request of His Highness, that his son should not be placed for instruction under a European tutor; and whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table the complete text of the letter the late Maharaja referred to in the previous answer of the Under Secretary, and of any reply thereto?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I shall be much obliged to the hon. Member if he will postpone this question. I have not been able to communicate with the Secretary of State to-day.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Will Monday do?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Yes; I think I shall be able to answer it on Monday.

MERCANTILE SHIPPING REGULATIONS IN INDIA.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Bill, so far as they affect foreign vessels loading or discharging in British ports, will apply (should they become law) to foreign vessels loading or discharging in Indian ports; and, if not, whether the Secretary of State for India will call the attention of the Government of India to the point, so that British subjects, whether English or Indian, may not be put at a disadvantage?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this question. The Bill would not apply to foreign vessels in Indian ports. It would, however, be open to the Government of India to enact analogous provisions.

SIR R. LETHBRIDGE: Arising out of that answer, I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman who is now representing the India Office here if the Secretary of State will communicate with the Government of India upon the subject?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I think my hon. Friend had better wait and see what the provisions of the Bill are.

IRELAND—DISTRICT INSPECTOR BIGLEY.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether representations have reached him that District Inspector Bigley, of Lurgan, lodged a complaint with the superior officer of a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary, named Dennis Burke, that he had been seen walking in company with a Nationalist car owner, named John Byrne, of Portadown, and that, in consequence of the report, Burke was removed to another station; and whether the Government will take any action in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The Constabulary Authorities report that the constable named was not transferred to another station on the grounds mentioned in the question, but because of his having absented himself from his station without leave.

IRISH FISHERIES.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to the Report of the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries dealing with the damage done by the drainage works to the spawning grounds, and to the statement of the Inspectors that the works at Lough Allen and Killaloe will have an injurious effect on salmon and trout fishing in the Shannon, as the excavations will destroy the spawning beds, and that the same result will ensue on continuation of the works at Battle Bridge; and whether any modification or alteration will be adopted in connection with the drainage works which will prevent such damage to the important fishing interests?

MR. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) also asked whether several communications have been received from the "Limerick Board of Fishery Conservators," requesting to be furnished with the Report of the Evidence taken by the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries last year in the inquiry held by them along the Shannon as to the alleged injuries to the fisheries by the

"Shannon drainage works," and the wholesale destruction of the salmon fry by the too sudden lowering of the sluice gates at Killaloe as also alleged; what was the nature of the Report on this inquiry, and will it be laid upon the Table; and what is the objection to the Report of the Evidence being supplied to the Board of Conservators at Limerick?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Inspectors of Irish Fisheries have reported that the drainage works on the Shannon will injure the fisheries. The Board of Works hold an opposite opinion. The Fishery Inspectors' Report, and the observations of the Board of Works thereon, have been communicated to the Conservators of the river, who originally moved in the matter, and whose reply is now awaited.

DR. TANNER: Will no attention be paid to this Report by the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries; will the suggestion of the Board of Works be adopted; are the representations of the Inspectors to be ignored?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My answer could not possibly have conveyed such an idea.

BALLYCOTTON PIER.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that the Grand Jury of the County of Cork have again refused to take over Ballycotton Pier from the Irish Board of Works; whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of Mr. Kirkby, M.A., C.E., that he found all the defects previously complained of more damaging to the structure, and that the pier was in a much worse condition, there being a distinct and appreciable settlement in the pier head, and the filling of the interior of the pier was also settling down and being washed away; and to the statement of General Thackwell, that he had also visited the pier and found it to be in a most unsatisfactory condition; and whether any steps will be taken during the coming season to remedy the defects and prevent further damage to the pier in question?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I have not seen the Report of the County Surveyor, or heard of any action of the Grand Jury. I am informed that the pier was examined by the Board of Works' District Engineer on the 22nd of January last. He reported that on a comparison of the levels at several well-defined points he could find no difference since they were measured in 1888, nor in the batter of the walls. With the exception of differences in a few points, which are of no structural importance, the pier and breakwater were in a complete state of preservation. No repairs whatever have either been made or required since the transfer to the county on the 31st January, 1888.

DR. TANNER: Am I to understand that the hon. Gentleman has not heard that the Grand Jury has refused, for the fifth time, to take this pier over?

*MR. JACKSON: I had not heard, until the hon. Member's question appeared upon the Paper, that any further action had been taken by the Grand Jury. As I have said, careful measures have been taken from time to time, and I believe that there has been no change in the condition of the pier.

DR. TANNER: If the Grand Jury persist in their refusal to take the pier over will the Treasury endeavour to get the defects complained of remedied?

*MR. JACKSON: Either last year or the year before I told the hon. Member, in answer to a question, that the pier had been handed over in consequence of the Act, and it is not in the power of the Treasury or the Board of Works to interfere.

ALLEGED SEVERE SENTENCE.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the report of the sentence inflicted on a young boy named Thomas Keefe, of Youghal, by Mr. Frank Hodder, R.M., from which it appears that Keefe was convicted on the unsupported evidence of a man named Josh Desmond; whether Mr. Hodder is correctly reported in Cork papers to have stated that he would sentence Keefe to six months' imprisonment with hard labour were it not for his youth; whether he is aware that the offence complained of was Keefe telling a man who spoke to and consulted him about the purchase of some cattle at Midleton Fair that the cattle were the property of a man who had occasioned the arrest of a mutual friend of theirs; and whether an inquiry will be made into the circumstances of the case?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that Keefe is not a young boy. He admitted in Court that he is 17 years of age, and that he was a dealer in cattle on his own account. He was represented by a solicitor at the hearing of the charge. The statement in the third paragraph does not accurately represent the offence. The man who was intimidated by Keefe from buying Desmond's cattle did not consult Keefe on the subject, nor was an attempt made at the trial to show that Keefe had any previous knowledge of the man. Desmond deposed to these facts in Court and his testimony was unshaken on cross-examination by the solicitor for the defence. No evidence was brought forward on behalf of Keefe. The magistrates, on the evidence produced, ordered Keefe to find bail for his future good behaviour, or, in default, three months' imprisonment. The Court had judicial knowledge of the prevalence of boycotting at Midleton Fair. The presiding magistrate did announce that only for the youth of the defendant, and that it was his first offence, the magistrates would have inflicted a sentence of six months' imprisonment. Keefe has given the required bail.

Dr. TANNER: Was he convicted on the unsupported evidence of Desmond?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have said that Desmond was a witness against him.

Dr. TANNER: The only witness?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know; but Desmond's evidence was unshaken on cross-examination.

Dr. TANNER: Was it not the simple fact that the man who wished to purchase the cattle asked the boy Keefe whose cattle they were; that the boy told him; and it was upon that that the charge was made?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: That does not appear to have been the fact, but contrary to the absolute fact.

Dr. TANNER: What evidence was there against Keefe except that of Desmond?

[No reply.]

Dr. TANNER: This is positively disgraceful.

Dr. Tanner

THE LAND COMMISSION.

Mr. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how soon will the Land Sub-Commissioners sit again at Nenagh, County Tipperary, no Sub-Commission having been held for the Unions of Nenagh, Borrisokane, and portion of the Roscrea Union connected with Tipperary, since the month of November, 1888; and whether, having regard to this fact, and considering the position of the tenants in these districts, in many of whose cases notices have been served for nearly three years, the tenants being still obliged to pay the old rents, and that in several hundreds of cases under the Land Act of 1887 notices have been lodged for more than two years, in which cases the tenants would be entitled to be refunded by the landlords the difference in the sums paid by them since the passing of the Act, and the amounts of the judicial rents when fixed, he will facilitate the holding of the Commission in these districts at an early date?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners report that a Sub-Commission sat to hear cases from the district named during the months of January and February, 1889. All originating notices received before 31st October, 1887, were disposed of at that sitting. The Commissioners have arranged for a Sub-Commission to sit for this district at an early date.

SHANNON DRAINAGE WORKS.

Mr. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, with reference to an answer which he gave on the 1st July last, in reply to a question from the hon. Member for Huntingdonshire (Mr. Smith-Barry), relating to the Shannon Drainage Works, namely—

> "That the Board of Works are of opinion that no serious injuries can result to the fisheries by these works,"

will he state on whose authority the Board of Works was guided in that opinion; whether the Shannon Conservators think differently; and whether the evidence taken by the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries in their inquiry tended to disprove the statement in question; and what amount of money was sunk in the drainage works at Killaloe, which were washed away by the recent floods?

*MR. JACKSON: I think, but I am not sure, that my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary has promised to lay certain Papers on the Table, which will, I understand, give the information sought by the hon. Member. As regards Killaloe, I would only refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him yesterday on the same subject.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN: Will the hon. Gentleman be good enough to answer the last part of the question?

*MR. JACKSON: I am unable to answer it. I do not know.

DR. TANNER: Has any modification or alteration been adopted in regard to the drainage works of Killaloe?

*MR. JACKSON: If the hon. Member will put the question on the Paper I will inquire.

POSTAL ACCOMMODATION AT NENAGH.

MR. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the cause of the long delay in the erection of the postal pillar boxes decided to be placed at certain points in the town of Nenagh, County Tipperary; and whether he will be pleased to have inquiry made?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): I find that the new letter box in Barrack Street, Nenagh, to which it is presumed the hon. Member refers, was erected yesterday. The box has not been placed in position quite so quickly as usual, owing, I understand, partly to delay on the part of the contractors in supplying it, and partly to a difficulty which arose in regard to the site.

THE STATUTE OF EDWARD III.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state when the Return of the Statute of Edward III., ordered on 3rd instant, will be issued?

*MR. JACKSON: It is not a matter within the control of the Treasury; but I have made inquiry, and I am informed that this Return will, it is hoped, be issued in a few days.

NET RENTAL IN IRELAND.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the term "net rental," used on page 3, Return C. 5879, Session 1889, and also on page 3, Return C.5978 Session 1890, of the Sales of Land (Ireland), has the same meaning as that given to it in his speech in introducing the Land Purchase Bill; and, if not, what is its meaning?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Net rent, as used by the Land Commission, excludes only head rent, Crown rent, tithe rent-charge, and drainage charge, but includes rates payable by landlord. Under my Bill the tenant will never have to pay head rent, Crown rent, or tithe rent-charge; and net rent, or, as it should rather be called, net value, excludes all rates hitherto paid by landlord, but henceforth to be paid by the purchasing tenant.

ALLEGED BOYCOTTING AT CORK.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the statements in the Irish newspapers of the boycotting of the Reverend Matthew Kerr, Presbyterian minister of Cork; and if he can state whether the reports are accurate; and, if so, what the nature of the boycotting is?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There has been, and is, so far as I know, no boycotting, either in the proper acceptation of that word or in the modified sense of exclusive dealing, of the reverend gentleman in question. I understand that he thought he was looked coldly on by his clerical brethren, and, further, that he was not appointed to a prison chaplaincy to which he considered he had a claim. These would seem to be the proceedings which he chooses to describe by the very inappropriate term of boycotting.

MR. SEXTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman adopted the obvious course of inquiring from the reverend gentleman himself?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

THE RIVER BARROW.

MR. LEAHY (Kildare, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if it is his intention to bring in a Bill for the drainage of the River Barrow this Session; and, if so, when does he purpose introducing it, and if it will be on the same lines as the one of last Session?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall bring in a Bill if I see a reasonable chance of passing it.

EVICTIONS IN DONEGAL.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the lately-contemplated evictions on the Stewart and Swiney Estates in County Donegal have been abandoned in deference to any suggestions made on the part of the Irish Executive; whether like suggestions were made to the agent of the Olphert Estate; and, if so, by whom, and what was his reply; how many families have been evicted on the Olphert Estate during the past week; how many evictions were abandoned and by whose authority, and for what cause they were abandoned; and whether the Government will propose by their Land Purchase Bill to enable tenants evicted, and more especially tenants evicted in congested districts on the seaboard since the Land Purchase Bill was introduced, to avail themselves of the provisions of the Bill?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must ask the hon. Member to repeat the question on Monday.

CHARGE AGAINST AN IRISH MAGISTRATE.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any complaints have reached the Lord Chancellor of the conduct of Mr. Hugh Graham, J.P., of Rahoney, Dromore, County Tyrone, accusing him of drunkenness and threatening to assault a passenger in a railway carriage on the 27th of March, 1889, of being under the influence of drink while giving evidence in a Land Court on 23rd January, 1889, when Mr. Justice Litton had him removed from court by a policeman; and of being on another occasion drunk at the Omagh Railway Station and annoying ladies, when a policeman who was asked to arrest him refused, on the grounds that he was on railway premises; and whether the Lord Chancellor has inquired into these allegations, and with what result?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must also ask the hon. Gentleman to repeat this question on Monday, and, in the meantime, I will obtain information.

THE EXPLOSIVES ACT.

MR. GILL (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether it is competent to hold a secret Court of Inquiry under the Explosives Act; and, if so, under what conditions and restrictions?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, University of Dublin): It is quite clear that a magistrate acting in Ireland under the 6th section of the Explosive Substances Act, 1883, may examine witnesses on oath and take their depositions otherwise than in open Court. Should the examination take place in the presence of any person charged with the offence his counsel or attorney are entitled to be present as of right.

MR. M'DERMOTT.

MR. GILL: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether Mr. M'Dermott, an evicted tenant of the Clanricarde Estate, has now been 11 weeks in prison; and whether, in view of the fact that he has been brought within the past week from Galway Gaol to Ballinasloe, and remanded for the tenth time for refusing to give evidence before a secret inquiry, and that he has on this, as on each previous occasion, offered to answer any questions put to him in open Court, under these circumstances, and considering the severe punishment this gentleman has now been subjected to, and the cost to the taxpayer involved in these frequent remands, he will now direct that Mr. M'Dermott be released?

MR. MADDEN: This is a matter entirely within the discretion of the magistrate, with whom the Executive cannot interfere.

MR. GILL: Considering the utter futility of this proceeding up to the present moment, the great expense involved, and also the fact that Mr. M'Dermott has repeatedly offered to answer any question that may be put to him in open Court, will the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary exercise the discretion vested in him and order the man's release?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not see anything in the argument of the hon. Gentleman that should affect the decision of the Government either one way or the other.

RICHARD PIGOTT.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Commissioner of Police sent an officer to Mr. Soames to ask him whether he had paid to the late Richard Pigott any of the notes which he sent, just before his flight, to his housekeeper in Dublin, and could he state what was the purport and date of Mr. Soames' reply; whether the police traced two of the notes for £10 and £5 as having been paid to Mr. Soames by his bankers upon his cheque; whether a constable then saw Mr. Soames, and upon what date, and with what object; whether Mr. Soames wrote, and on what date, complaining of the language used to him by the constable; whether any reply has been sent to this letter; and whether, having regard to the fact that a witness before the Special Commission absconded while under cross-examination, the Home Office have also ascertained, or will ascertain, to whom and when Mr. Soames paid the two notes, and who paid them to Pigott, and when?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The answer to the first, third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs is in the negative. The answer to the second paragraph is in the affirmative. The police did endeavour to ascertain whether any person was responsible for the absconding of the witness Pigott. The inquiries made, of which I have already given the hon. Member the result, and the evidence given in Court having satisfied the police that Mr. Soames was not so responsible, any such inquiry as suggested in the last paragraph would be immaterial.

Mr. COBB: Does the right hon. Gentleman not understand that it has never been suggested that Mr. Soames was responsible? But have not the Home Office attempted to trace the notes to the actual person who paid them to Pigott?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The police found that the two notes ultimately came from Mr. Soames; but whether they passed through Mr. Soames's hands or through the hands of some of his clerks was not a matter for the police to inquire into.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that these notes were drawn by Mr. Soames from the bank before, according to his own evidence, he knew anything about Pigott?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have given as complete an answer as I can. Mr. Soames drew the notes from the bank; they were subsequently found in the possession of Pigott's housekeeper; and therefore no further inquiry was necessary.

Mr. COBB: The point is, who was the individual who placed those notes in Pigott's hands?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I perfectly understand what the hon. Member means, and I have given him all the information I possess.

INSPECTOR JARVIS.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will cause Frederick Jarvis, now and in 1888 in the service of the Criminal Detective Department, to be asked whether he was, in November or December of 1888, at Kansas City with two persons named Pinkerton, who have a private detective agency in the United States; whether he went with the two Pinkertons to Pueblo Colorado, and whether he went himself to Del Norte, which is close to the ranche belonging to P. J. Sheridan; whether his presence in Del Norte was in any way connected with the vicinity of the ranche to that town; and whether the Pinkertons' agency is employed by Her Majesty's Government?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I repeat once again that Inspector Jarvis has never at any time been at or near Kansas City, or Del Norte, Colorado. The story of this officer's mission to Colorado is an absolute fabrication. I make this statement on the information of Jarvis's superior officer, who, of course, has taken proper means to satisfy himself of the facts.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Does the right hon. Gentleman himself know that Jarvis's superior officer has satisfied himself of these facts?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have had the information communicated to me by Inspector Jarvis's superior officer as authoritative.

THE HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPT COMMISSION.

MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can explain how it is that some of the volumes issued by the Historical Manuscript Commission in 1888 were allowed to appear without the valuable and exhaustive index which usually accompanies these interesting collections of manuscripts; and if, seeing that the value and usefulness of these volumes are largely enhanced by such an index, he will request the Historical Manuscripts Commission to prepare and publish an index to the manuscripts of the Duke of Rutland, the manuscripts of Earl Cowper, and any other volume of the series that is at present without an index?

*MR. JACKSON: A question upon this subject was answered by the Under Secretary for the Home Department yesterday. Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to repeat the question to my hon. Friend.

SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST A WARDER.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in connection with the murder of a prisoner in Strangeways Gaol, whether, in view of the fact that the warder Mitchell had been previously charged by the Governor of the Gaol in question with assulting another delirious prisoner, any steps were taken by the Prison Commissioners to prevent the repetition of such an offence; whether Mitchell will be re-admitted into the prison service; whether, as Mr. Justice Grantham, in his charge to the jury, said that probably the day warder, Rappley, had been the cause of Gatcliffe's death, it is the intention of the Government to proceed against Rappley; and whether an inquiry will be instituted into the circumstances of the case, and take into consideration the suggestions of Inspector Captain Wilson?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): It is not the fact that Mitchell had been previously charged with assaulting a prisoner, and he was charged at the Assizes, not with murder, but with manslaughter, and was acquitted. Mitchell has not been re-admitted into the prison service, and will not be. I do not understand the Judge to have expressed an opinion as stated in the question. There is no evidence against Rappley which would justify proceedings being taken against him. The fullest inquiry has already been made into the whole of the circumstances, and every precaution will be taken in future to prevent the possibility of such an occurrence.

THE NEW FOREST.

MR. COMPTON (Hants, New Forest): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if his attention, or that of the Commissioners of Woods, &c., has been lately directed to the enclosure of some 50 acres of the open lands of the New Forest, in the parish of Boldre, in or about the year 1832; and if he could state under what powers these enclosures were made; if under the Act of 1 and 2 Will. 4, cap. 57, under what powers the Office of Woods, &c., now claim a fee simple in such land free of commoners' rights, and charge a rack rent for the same under a lease made to private Trustees?

MR. JACKSON: Yes, Sir. The attention of the Treasury has been directed to the subject of my hon. Friend's question. These enclosures were made under the Act of 1 and 2 Will. IV., cap. 59, not 57, as stated in the question; and I am informed that, inasmuch as this land has been enclosed for more than 20 years, the rights of the commoners have been extinguished.

In reply to a further question by Mr. COMPTON,

MR. JACKSON said: I understand that a record is kept in the Inland Revenue Department. I am not aware whether a record is also kept in any other office; but if the hon. Member will repeat the question I will answer it upon another day.

THE LAND TAX.

MR. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the *quota* of land tax for each parish is permanently fixed by law, subject to reduction only on proof of redemptions effected within the parish; if the Land Tax Commissioners for the division have power to reduce the *quota* on such proof being given, or if an order or certificate of the Inland Revenue Department is required; if there is any, and what, appeal in cases where the full *quota* is levied after proof of redemption has been offered; and, if there is a record accessible to the public kept in the Inland Revenue Department, and in the several divisional offices, of the various properties which have been from time to time exonerated from Land Tax by redemption, and of the *quotas* as they at present stand?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The answer to the first question is, yes. As to the second question, the *quota* can only be reduced upon receipt of an authority under the hand of the Registrar of Land Tax or his deputy, who are officers of the Inland Revenue Department. As to the third question, an appeal can be made to the Land Tax Commissioners of the district, and their decision is final. The answer to the fourth question is, yes. A record is kept in both cases in the Inland Revenue Department.

ARMENIAN OUTRAGES.

MR. LEVESON GOWER (Stoke-upon-Trent): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been drawn to the account in the *Daily News* of 24th March, describing the continued ill-treatment of the Christian population of Armenia; whether Her Majesty's Government have taken, or propose taking, any steps to ascertain the truth of these reports; and whether, in the event of their proving substantially correct, the Government are prepared to make any representations to the Turkish Government with a view to protecting the Armenians from a continuation or recurrence of such outrages?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The account given in the *Daily News* of the 24th states from Vienna, on the authority of intelligence from Constantinople, that the Patriarch has received from the chief Armenian ecclesiastical authority in Van a letter giving full details of several cases of murder, pillage, and outraging of women; as Her Majesty's Government have not seen the letter referred to they are at present without the particulars which are necessary for them to consider whether any fresh instructions should be sent to Her Majesty's Ambassador. The hon. Member will find, at the last page of Turkey No. 1, 1890, the instructions sent to Sir W. White on the 24th of January, which direct his Excellency to take every fitting opportunity to impress upon the Government of the Sultan the danger of allowing the continuance of such a state of things as had been shown to exist in the districts of Van, Bitlis, and Mush. Reports have been received that the lately appointed Vali of Bitlis, Raouf Pasha, has exerted himself greatly to check disorders.

MR. LEVESON GOWER: Do the Government propose to inquire into the truth of the newspaper account to which my question refers?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: We cannot undertake to make inquiry into the truth of all newspaper statements which are made in an anonymous paragraph and professedly at third hand.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Is there any reason, when statements of this character have been made, why the right hon. Gentleman should not communicate with the Ambassador and inquire from him whether they have been confirmed?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Reports of this character have been contradicted and shown to be without foundation repeatedly. If the occurrences referred to in the newspaper have taken place I feel sure that they will be brought to the notice of the Government in the ordinary course.

MR. BRYCE: I hope my hon. Friend will repeat the question.

SCOTCH SALMON FISHERIES COMMISSION.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Royal Commission on Scotch Salmon Fisheries have concluded their proceedings; whether, in addition to examining those who are officially responsible for what has been done, they have given the fishermen round the coasts and fishers on the rivers full opportunity of explaining their grievances; and how many of them have been examined?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. MAXWELL, Wigtonshire): As I had the honour of being Chairman of this Commission, perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to answer the question. The Commissioners have concluded their inquiry, and will shortly meet to consider their Report. Every opportunity was given to fishermen interested in the question to give evidence, notice having been inserted in the newspapers of the meetings and inviting the attendance of witnesses. None, however, came forward, except at Berwick-on-Tweed and Dumfries, at each of which places the Commission held a meeting. The evidence of 12 fishermen was offered and taken.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Where did the Commissioners sit? Did they visit the localities along the coast in order to give an opportunity to the fishermen to be heard?

SIR H. MAXWELL: The Commissioners held sittings in Edinburgh, and also at any other place where they were invited to go.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Were they invited to go to any place on the East Coast?

SIR H. MAXWELL: Yes. My right hon. Friend the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks) invited them to visit Berwick, and they went there. They were also invited to go to Dumfries, on the West Coast.

FEMALE CLERKSHIPS IN THE POST OFFICE.

MR. BLANE: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the Civil Service Commissioners can state the shortest period within which they will hold the next examination for female clerkships in the General Post Office; and if the Commissioners will consider the advisability of holding these examinations at regular stated intervals, so that candidates may not lose time and money in preparing for an examination which may not be held till after they have passed the limits of age?

*MR. JACKSON: The Civil Service Commissioners inform me that they are unable to state within what period the next examination for female clerkships in the General Post Office will be held. The date must depend on the requirements of the Service.

THE MEDICINE STAMP ACT.

MR. BUCHANAN: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the varying decisions that have been given by the Inland Revenue Department as to what medical preparations need the patent medicine stamp and what do not; and whether he can take steps to amend the Medicine Stamp Act, or to secure its more uniform administration, or otherwise endeavour to allay the dissatisfaction felt amongst chemists and druggists on the subject?

*MR. GOSCHEN: My attention has been from time to time called to complaints of varying decisions given by the Inland Revenue Department in this matter, but there appears to be no general dissatisfaction, and the trade has manifested no general desire for the amendment of the Medicine Stamp Act. Every attempt, however, has been made to secure its uniform administration. In addition to issuing a summary of the Medicine Stamp Law with observations thereon for the guidance of chemists, the Inland Revenue Department has undertaken at the request of the trade to advise as to the liability involved by the use of labels. These labels number some thousands per annum, and it is almost unavoidable that varying decisions should occasionally be given considering the many relaxations from the comprehensive charge imposed by law.

CHARGE AGAINST PUBLICANS.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to a case at the Derby Borough Court on Thursday 20th March, when two publicans were summoned for supplying liquor to a drunken man, Alfred Hall, who died shortly after, and in whose case the verdict was "death from apoplexy, caused by excessive drinking;" whether the magistrates, having come to the unanimous decision that both of the defendants were guilty, fined one of them 40 shillings, and the other one 20 shillings, without endorsing either of their licences; and if this be correct, whether he will consider the expediency of legislating to provide more efficient measures for preventing this class of offences?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Justices that the facts are as stated. The defence of the landlords was that it was not noticeable to them or to their servants that the deceased was the worse for drink, and they gave evidence themselves and called witnesses to prove that the man was not drunk. The magistrates considered the case proved; but, having regard to the previous good character of the defendants, and to the fact that they did not know the deceased was drunk, they did not endorse their licences. I think the discretion of the Justices can be safely trusted in such cases; and I do not see any necessity for an amendment of the law.

SIR W. LAWSON: Is it not the duty of a publican to know when a man is drunk?

[No reply.]

ENFIELD SMALL ARMS FACTORY.

CAPTAIN BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, considering that the inhabitants about, and the workmen employed in, the Government Small Arms Factory at Enfield have subscribed largely towards public baths and washhouses for the use of the Government hands, and that Trinity College, Cambridge, has given the site, also that when completed the Local Board have signified their willingness to take them over, the Government can see their way to give a small grant towards the cost of their erection?

MR. JACKSON: This question has been most carefully considered at the Treasury with a view to meet, if possible, the wishes of the inhabitants at Enfield, and the Treasury would have been glad, had the Local Board adopted the Public Baths and Washhouse Acts, to contribute the Government *quota* towards the rates. The Treasury, however, in view of the number of places at which the Government employs large numbers of workpeople, were compelled to the conclusion that they ought not to contribute to the capital cost of the baths. I am glad to observe that my hon. Friend states that the baths when complete will be taken over by the Local Board, and if there is power and a rate is levied for the cost of maintenance the Government will gladly contribute its *quota*.

MILITIA CAPTAINS' CONTINGENT ALLOWANCE.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, in reference to Army Order No. 84, which deprives Captains of Militia of their contingent allowance, how armourers' charges for repairing and oiling arms, company stationery, and other minor charges will in future be met; and if he will state how many men in course of the training of their regiments during 1889 died or deserted; what was the total amount of their debtor balances; and what was the total amount of the contingent allowance paid to Captains of Militia for that year?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The charges for repairing and oiling arms will fall upon the allowance granted to the officer commanding the corps under Articles 774 and 775 of the Militia Regulations. Company stationery will be provided from the Regimental Contingent Fund allowance under Article 770. Other minor charges must be more clearly defined before I can say how they will be met. The records for 1889 are not yet sufficiently complete to enable me to answer the latter part of the question; but, practically, captains of companies are relieved of all liability on account of debts contracted by their men while out for training, and also of the debtor balances of men who die or desert. They are thus gainers rather than losers by the new Regulations.

SEVERE SENTENCES — CASE OF J. THORNTON AND J. HAIGH.

SIR EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that Joseph Thornton and John Haigh were, on the 4th of March, at Durham, sentenced by Mr. Justice Day to six and seven years' penal servitude for assaulting a gamekeeper; and whether he is aware that, though the men in question were found poaching by the gamekeeper, it was close to the road, and in the day time; that no previous convictions were proved against them; and that no more dangerous weapon than a turnip was used in the assault; and, if so, whether he will make further inquiries with a view to considering the justice of the sentences?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I have seen a newspaper report of this case, from which I gather that the gamekeeper was brutally illtreated by the prisoners, who knocked him down, kicked him, tried to strangle him, and beat him about the head with a turnip until he became unconscious and received injuries from which he was still suffering after four months. The Judge, in summing up, called attention to the fact that there was no provocation whatever. Unless the hon. Baronet is in a position to place before me any new facts which were not before the Judge at the trial, I should not feel justified in interfering with the sentence.

RIGHTS OF WAY IN SCOTLAND.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, seeing that the Representatives of Scotland in this House on Tuesday week, in the proportion of nearly seven to one, voted in favour of entrusting to the County Councils the duty of maintaining and protecting rights of way in Scotland, the Government will bring in a Bill to give effect to the clearly expressed wishes of the Scottish people on this subject?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The Government have given their attention to this subject, with every desire to meet the wishes of hon. Members. While in the present state of public business the Government are not prepared to propose legislation, they will be ready to give their candid consideration to any Bill which may be introduced by a private Member.

TORPEDO PRACTICE IN THE MEDWAY.

MR. EDWARD KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Rochester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the result of the inquiries promised to be made regarding the explosions of torpedoes in the River Medway, and the consequent injury caused to the fishing industry in that river?

Sir Edward Grey

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Unfortunately torpedo practice cannot be carried on without injury to fish in the neighbourhood of the experiments; but so far as can be ascertained there is, and for many years has been, very little fishing in the Medway so far up as the mine-fields of the School of Military Engineering. No complaints appear to have been made at all recently to the Military Authorities.

RAILWAY RATES.

MR. ROBERT SPENCER (Northampton, Mid): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the maximum rates which the Board of Trade may agree upon with the Railway Companies will increase the actual rates to be charged for the conveyance of agricultural and dairy produce?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The hon. Member will understand that the whole question is now under consideration, and that it is not possible for me at this stage to say anything as to the relation of future *maxima* rates to present actual rates.

MR. COBB: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Report or the result of the Railway Rates inquiry will be laid before the House?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I am not surprised at the hon. Member's question. The inquiry has lasted a great deal longer than I thought it would. I will do my best to bring the result before the House in the present Session, in the manner contemplated by the Act.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): May I ask if it is not the fact that maximum rates do not affect the actual rates charged?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I thought that everybody understood that.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of the Government has been directed to the following Reuter's telegram from St. John's, Newfoundland:—

"An immense demonstration and mass meeting of colonists took place here yesterday in connection with the Fisheries Question. Resolutions were unanimously passed indignantly protesting against the *modus vivendi* recently arrived at on the subject between France and England. The meeting authorised

Memorials to be drawn up to the Queen and the Imperial Parliament, demanding the extinction of French claims in the island, and appointed delegates to urge in London the importance of the present crisis;"

and whether, in view of the strong feeling in Newfoundland, the Government will take steps to open up fresh negotiations with France, in order that a fresh *modus vivendi* may be arrived at on the Fishery Question, which will meet with the sanction of Newfoundlanders?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have seen the Report telegraphed. The House will see that no *modus vivendi* could be arrived at which would satisfy those who desire the extinction of French claims in Newfoundland. The matter in question is the respective rights of British and French fishermen under a certain Treaty. Her Majesty's Government and the French Government are approaching a basis of settlement; and, in the meantime, have agreed that without compromising principles or rights involved, the *status quo* as regards lobster-fishing and factories on the so-called French shore shall be maintained, thus obviating temporarily causes of dispute and possible conflict. The *modus vivendi* only applies to the season now opening. I may add that three days ago the *modus vivendi* was violently attacked in the French Chamber, and the right of the colonial fishermen to catch lobsters on the French shore at all was energetically denied by the Minister. A *modus vivendi* is therefore necessary. I think I have already stated that the despatch explaining the steps which led to the *modus vivendi* and giving the full text of it had not reached Newfoundland when the meeting in question was held. It will, in fact, not reach the Colony till next week. The policy of the arrangement will then be better understood.

MR. W. REDMOND: In view of the extraordinarily excited state of public feeling in Newfoundland over this question will the Government take the earliest opportunity of cableing the full text of the arrangement with France?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have repeatedly expressed a wish that the Premier of Newfoundland should visit this country; and they think it very desirable that delegates from the Colony should attend here, in order that British interests may not be injured by action hastily taken by persons in the Colony without full information.

MR. W. REDMOND: Is not the excitement in Newfoundland due to the fact that the full nature of the arrangement come to is not understood; and, if so, will Her Majesty's Government send out a full account? Will the Premier of Newfoundland, who has been invited to visit this country, be consulted before any final arrangement is come to?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have stated that a despatch giving all information is on its way to Newfoundland; but I cannot venture to indicate what may be done in the future. No doubt the feeling of the Colony will be consulted.

THE REVEREND J. DOBIE.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has now received information with regard to the imprisonment of the Reverend J. Dobie at Hodeidah; and what steps have been taken to obtain redress for the ill-treatment he has undergone?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No information has yet been received. Inquiry will be made of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople as to what are the circumstances of the case?

THE FISHERY BOARD BILL.

MR. MARJORIBANKS: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Fishery Board Bill promised by the Government, will be introduced before the Easter Recess, in order that it may receive due consideration by the classes interested therein?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I hope this Bill will be introduced shortly after Easter.

EDUCATION STATISTICS.

MR. JOHN TALBOT (University of Oxford): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education when the Education Statistics for the year 1889 will be laid upon the Table?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The statistics to which my hon. Friend refers have been laid upon the Table this afternoon. It may be for the convenience of the House to know that the Revised Instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors in connection with the new Code have also been presented to-day, and will be in the hands of Members as soon as possible.

CIVIL SERVICE, SECOND DIVISION.

Mr. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, with reference to the Order in Council of 21st March regulating the future position of the Second Division of the Civil Service, whether it is intended in future to promote into the higher grade, or otherwise specially remunerate beyond ordinary members of the Second Division, clerks whose duties involve the superintendence of other clerks, or are otherwise of a more responsible character than the duties of the generality of their colleagues?

Mr. JACKSON: The Order in Council of March 21 makes promotion into the higher grade of the Second Division of the Civil Service dependent on positive merit. Apart from such promotion, the Treasury stated in their Minute of August 10 last their concurrence with the Royal Commissioners that clerks of the Second Division of proved merit should be selected for a certain number of special posts, and should be eligible also for appointment to the Upper Division in case of exceptional fitness. The condition of not less than 10 years' service laid down in Clause 18 of the Order in Council of February 12, 1876, governing such promotions, has been altered by the Order in Council of March 21, 1890, to a requirement of eight years' service. These are the provisions for specially rewarding clerks of the Second Division.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Will the hon. Gentleman lay the Order in Council upon the Table?

Mr. JACKSON: Yes; I shall be glad to do so.

REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Mr. BRYCE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to resume the attempt on which they entered in the Session of 1888, to reform the constitution of the other House of Parliament?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I can only speak of the intentions of the Government so far as the present Session is concerned. I must remind the hon. Member that a little later in the Session than this the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), in referring to a proposal which was before the House of Lords in 1888 for the reform of that Body, remarked that it was a subject which "in its natural dimensions would require the fresh, unbroken, and virgin energy of the House." I think the business already before the House for the present Session is not of a character which would permit of "fresh, unbroken, and virgin energy" being given to the consideration of the important measure to which the hon. Member refers.

Mr. BRYCE: If the right hon. Gentleman considers the question still of such importance, does he desire the House to understand that he proposes to resume it in another Session?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am always extremely reluctant to enter upon any indefinite undertaking.

CATTLE DISEASE.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether it is true that no cattle disease has been reported to exist in the Netherlands; and, if so, whether he will instruct the authorities to relax the restriction placed upon cattle and sheep coming from those ports?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Chaplin, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): There is no disease in the Netherlands, so far as we are informed; but it prevails extensively in Germany, and at no great distance from the Netherlands frontier. As a matter of fact, animals from the Netherlands are now admitted into the interior of this country, and are not even subject to the Order to slaughter at the port of debarcation. But, in view of the danger of disease crossing the Dutch frontier in spite of the precautions of that Government, the English Inspectors at the ports, in the exercise of the duties imposed upon them by statute, detain the animals for a certain number of days at their discretion, so as to insure their being free from contagious disease, before they are allowed to pass into the interior of the country. It would not be wise or desirable, in my opinion, to relax those precautions at present.

MR. MUNDELLA: May I ask why, if there is no disease in the Netherlands, cattle from that country should be sent to compulsory slaughter?

MR. CHAPLIN: It is quite true that just now the cattle in the Netherlands are free from disease, and, as far as I know, from the precautions which have been taken, they have been free from disease for a considerable period. But, on the other hand, there has been a good deal of smuggling of animals over the frontier from Germany.

PRIVILEGE.

SIR W. MARRIOTT AND MR. PARNELL.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I desire, Sir, to ask the right hon. and learned Member for Brighton (Sir W. Marriott) a question of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether the report on the leader page of the *Times* of yesterday of a speech delivered by him on Wednesday evening at a meeting of a body called the United Club, held at St. James's Hall, is correct?

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): As a point of order, Sir, I wish to ask you whether a question can be put by one hon. Member to another unless such question refers to some Bill or Motion before the House?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Brighton holds an official position, and therefore the question can be put.

SIR W. MARRIOTT (Brighton): I have only a few minutes ago received notice of this question. Unlike most Members of this House, I do occasionally read the report of my speeches, and I have read the report of my speech of last Wednesday in the *Times* of yesterday. Though not *verbatim*, it was, according to my recollection, a very accurate report.

MR. SEXTON: I have, then, to call the attention of the House to a matter of privilege. In order to ground the case of breach of privilege, I hope the House will allow me to read a brief extract from the Report of the Special Commission. The Commissioners say, on page 58 of the Report—

> "The third charge we have to consider is that, when on certain occasions the respondents thought it politic to denounce and did denounce certain crimes in public, they afterwards led their supporters to believe that such denunciation was not sincere. This was chiefly based on the letter known throughout the inquiry as the *fac simile* letter. We find that all the letters produced by Pigott and set out in the Appendix are forgeries, and we entirely acquit Mr. Parnell and the other respondents of the charge of insincerity in their denunciation of the Phœnix Park murders."

Having read that extract from the Report of the Commission, I propose to bring to your notice, and the notice of the House, three extracts from the report of the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Brighton, on Wednesday, at the United Club, which the right hon. Gentleman has just admitted in the presence of the House to be substantially correct. This, Sir, is the first extract—

> "When the Report of the Commission came to be examined in all its details, he might venture to say that, on the whole, the *Times* had substantiated the points upon which they started."

I denounce that statement as untrue. The charges upon which the inquiry was demanded and upon which it was conceded were charges of complicity in crime on the part of Members of this House. These were the only charges in which the Irish Members and the country were interested—charges of intimacy with murderers, of payments to criminals for the commission of crime, and to secure the escape of criminals; and all those charges have been repelled by the Commissioners. The right hon. Gentleman, by his votes in this House on the 10th and 11th of this month, concurred in the adoption of the Report of the Judges. What, then, are we to think of the man who, after giving his vote concurring in such Report, within a fortnight afterwards declares that these heinous charges have been proved? He further said—

> "It should be recollected that the letters which had been so much spoken of were not the charge against Mr. Parnell and his friends. They were only evidence of the charge. Disproof of the letters did not disprove the charge."

And then the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that the charge had been "substantiated." What is the charge that he says has been substantiated?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman has asked the permission of the House to raise a matter of privilege; but he is now making a statement and entering into arguments as to the meaning and effect of a speech delivered by an hon. Member of this House outside this House. Matters of privilege are much restricted. It is usual in such cases to read the incriminated passages to the House, and then we have to see whether they constitute *primâ facie* a case of privilege. But, so far, the hon. Gentleman is stating to the House his version of what the right hon. Gentleman said. If he will hand the passages of the report to the Clerk at the Table they can be read to the House.

MR. SEXTON: Then I move that the passages which I have marked in the speech of the hon. Member for Brighton be read by the Clerk at the Table.

*MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Member will bring the paper to the Table the Clerk will read the passages referred to.

MR. SEXTON: I have only one copy, and I desire to have it back.

Complaint made to the House by Mr. Sexton, Member for West Belfast, of certain passages in a speech delivered at the United Club by the Right Hon. Sir William Marriott, Member for Brighton, and reported in the *Times* newspaper of Thursday, the 27th March, reflecting on certain Members of this House, which he submitted constituted a breach of the Privileges of this House:—

The said newspaper was handed in, and the passages complained of were read, and therewith, at the request of the Right Hon. Sir William Marriott, the context also, as followeth:—

"When the Report of the Commission came to be examined in all its details he might venture to say that, on the whole, the *Times* had substantiated the points upon which they started, and the result of the Commission was to justify the action of the Unionist Party in the year 1886. It should be recollected that the letters which had been so much spoken of were not the charge against Mr. Parnell and his friends. They were only evidence of the charge. Disproof of the letters did not disprove the charge. The charge which was sought to be proved by the letter was that Mr. Parnell was insincere in his denunciation of the Phœnix Park murders. Of what was that letter evidence? For his part, he never thought so much of the letter as many people did, because he thought it a very natural letter under the circumstances. Mr. Parnell was in alliance with these people, he was paid from the same funds, and he had the unpleasant task of denouncing his allies. He believed that Mr. Parnell had a perfect horror of the murders, and that he might have known they did more harm than they could possibly do good to his cause; but he was bound to take off the rough edge of the denunciation he was compelled to give of the crime. If Mr. Parnell had written the letter he did not think he would be in a bit worse position than he now was placed in by the Report of the Judges. The *Times* had entirely established its case, namely, that Mr. Parnell was acting in alliance with others wanting separation, that he and his Parliamentary colleagues had no complicity in the illegal means taken to advance their common end by his allies, and that the letter was only one proof of the charge brought against them, which charge had been substantiated before the Commission. The Report was very satisfactory in some points, but with regard to others there was still a mystery. There was still a mystery over the letters, and there was still a mystery over the question how that £100,000 had been spent. The Report found that the letter sometimes called the *fac simile* letter was a forgery. What was a *fac simile* letter but a letter like another letter that had been written? What was a forgery? It might be a pure invention, and the person whose name was used had never signed such a letter, or it might be a copy of an original document. That subject was left in the dark by the Report of the Commission. The Parnellite Party complained that the Judges did not denounce the *Times* for its negligence with regard to these letters. He knew Her Majesty's Judges extremely well, and he would undertake to say that they had always good reason for either saying something or omitting to say something."

MR. SEXTON: I respectfully submit, Mr. Speaker, that the extracts read by your direction by the Clerk at the Table from the report of a speech the accuracy of which has been admitted by the right hon. Gentleman constitute a gross breach of the privileges of the House. I first call attention to the fact that the right hon. Gentleman says that the *Times* has, on the whole, substantiated its charges before the Commission. I denounce that statement as unfounded, and I say that with regard to all these heinous charges the Irish Members, as is universally admitted, have been absolutely acquitted. Now, I come to the passage with regard to the forged letters. The right hon. Gentleman said—

"It should be recollected that the letters which had been so much spoken of were not the charge against Mr. Parnell. They were only evidence of the charge. Disproof of the letters did not disprove the charge. The charge which was sought to be proved by the letters was that Mr. Parnell was insincere in his denunciation of the Phœnix Park murders. Of what was that letter evidence? . . . . The letter was only one proof of the charge brought against them, which charge had been substantiated before the Commission."

I ask the House what charge has been substantiated? I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman to define it in precise terms.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have listened to the hon. Member, and I am bound to say that this is not a case of privilege. It is the first time I have heard the passage or anything connected with it; but it is not a case of privilege—that I am clear about, having listened to the whole statement. It is a matter of argument as to the conclusions drawn by an hon. Member from a certain decision of the Judges, as to which every hon. Member is at liberty to affirm his own conclusions. Whether those conclusions are just or unjust is a matter of opinion, and the right hon. Gentleman advances this statement on his own credit and on his own responsibility. As to this being a matter of privilege, the passages in question do not relate to the action or to the conduct of any hon. Member in this House, and this is the point to which privilege is restricted in cases like the present. I, therefore, do not consider this a case which I could properly submit to the House as a breach of privilege.

MR. SEXTON: Allow me to submit a few considerations. This speech arises out of a number of charges now ascertained to be false, made against a number of Members of the House. Those Members besought the Government to afford them means of investigation, and the Government appointed a Judicial Tribunal. That Judicial Body found certain charges to be false, and reported to that effect. The House is seized of the Report and of the findings of the Commission with regard to certain charges; and I humbly ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is still competent for a Member of this House to declare that the charges found by the Commission appointed by this House to be false, are proved?

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not in the least alter the case. The whole of the quutations made by the hon. Member have been comments on the decision of the Judges; and provided they are made in such a way that they do not reflect upon the action of Members of this House ——[Mr. W. REDMOND: Oh!] The hon. Member does not understand what privilege is if he interrupts me in that manner. I say that privilege is restricted in this House, and comments, unjust or unfair though they may be—I say nothing of their justice or fairness—it is competent for any hon. Member to make, and to state the judgment he has formed as to the decision of the Commissioners. If every hon. Gentleman's speech commenting on the Report of the Judges is to be brought up as a question of privilege the time of the House would be entirely occupied with such questions.

MR. SEXTON: I wish first to say that I was not the Member who interrupted you.

*MR. SPEAKER: I am quite aware of that.

MR. W. REDMOND: Mr. Speaker——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. SEXTON: I now beg to submit to you in regard to the forged letters, as to which hon. Members of this House from their places here have declared their innocence, that the right hon. Gentleman in maintaining in a public speech that those Members were guilty has made an imputation against them as Members of this House.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not gather from the extracts read that the right hon. Gentleman did state that there was any responsibility attaching in regard to the forged letters to those hon. Gentlemen acquitted by the Commission. There was no charge of that sort made by the right hon. Gentleman, as I understood it.

MR. SEXTON: The learned Gentleman in his speech said that my hon. Friend the Member for Cork was responsible for the forged letters, for he said—

> "What was a *fac simile* letter but a letter like another letter that had been written? What was a forgery? It might be a pure invention; and the person whose name was used had never signed such a letter, or it might be a copy of an original document. The subject was left in the dark by the Report of the Commission."

I humbly submit to you that although the learned Gentleman admits that the letter forged by Pigott was a forgery, he suggests that it was the reflection of a genuine letter written by the hon. Member for Cork.

*MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the best way would be to ask the right hon. Gentleman for an explanation on that specific point.

SIR W. MARRIOTT: I admit fully the accuracy of the report; but there are some points omitted which would afford an explanation, and there are also some words in my speech, the whole of which was not read, which would give the House a full idea of what was said. A great deal was said in no very serious way, but rather as chaff and banter. What I did say, and what does not appear, was this: I said it was reported that Mr. Parnell was going to ask for a Committee, and I said I thought that would be a great waste of time, and if he would take a friendly hint he would ask, not for a Committee, but for a friendly arbitration with the *Times*, with Lord Herschell as arbitrator. I further suggested that if Mr. Parnell was inclined to act in a friendly manner to the *Times* he should let the *Times* have the services of Mr. George Lewis; and the *Times*, by way of returning the compliment, might let Mr. Parnell have the services of Mr. Soames; while the senior Member for Northampton might come in as *amicus curiæ*, and then no doubt they would get at the facts as to the letters and the expenditure of the £100,000. But I never made a single charge against any Irish Member or against the hon. Member for Cork. I gave my interpretation of the Report of the Commission; that interpretation I am ready to maintain, and I think I am as well entitled to my opinion as other Members of the House are to theirs.

Mr. SEXTON: I will not add another word. The right hon. Member, having made grave and deadly charges against Members of the House, now shelters himself behind what he calls chaff. I leave him to what he has deserved—the contempt of the House and the country.

Mr. W. REDMOND: As a matter of personal explanation, I should like to explain that the involuntary exclamation which escaped me was not intended in any degree to interrupt you, Sir, or to cause any disrespect to you. It was merely a protest against the action of the hon. Member.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I am glad to hear what has fallen from the hon. Member, and I quite accept his explanation that the exclamation was involuntary, and thank him for his courtesy.

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS.

Return ordered—

"Of Copies of certain Objections and Suggestions received by the Charity Commissioners from Public Bodies and others relative to the Central Scheme published by the Charity Commissioners in pursuance of 'The City of London Parochial Charities Act, 1883,' for the regulation of the Charities comprised in the Second Schedule to that Act, and of the Replies of the Charity Commissioners thereto and to certain other like Objections and Suggestions."

"And, of certain Memoranda and Reports prepared by the Charity Commissioners or their Assistant Commissioners on Technical Instruction on Institutions combining Recreation with Education, and on Free Libraries."—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

James Somervell, esquire, for Ayr District of Burghs.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.

Army (Annual) Bill, without Amendment:—

That they have passed a Bill, intituled "An Act to enable Incorporated Companies to act as executors, administrators, and trustees, and in other fiduciary capacities." [Trust Companies Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled "An Act for the appointment of a Public Trustee." [Public Trustee Bill [Lords.]

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDERS OF THE DAY.)

Viscount CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can give some intimation, in the event of the Tithes Bill being read a second time this evening, what day will be fixed for the Committee stage?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope on Monday, the 21st; certainly not before that day.

Mr. OLDROYD (Dewsbury): Will the Allotments Bill be taken on Monday?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government propose to take Supply on Monday.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I think the reply a little ambiguous. The House would prefer to know positively whether the Allotments Bill will or will not be taken on Monday?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think my answer was sufficient. Supply is likely to take the whole evening. The Bill will not be taken.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): What business will be taken on Monday, April 14?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Supply will be taken.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: What Supply?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I cannot say, but ample notice will be given.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Order for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Tithe Rent-charge Recovery and Redemption Bill have precedence this day of all Orders of the Day, including the Committee of Supply."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

(4.50.) Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I have not risen to oppose the Motion, but I wish to have some sort of understanding with the First Lord of the Treasury, in view of his persistent raids on the time of private Members. Apparently this demand is made in order to get an additional day for the discussion of the Tithes Bill; but, in point of fact, it really is asked in order to secure to the Government an additional day for the Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Easter vacation will not take place unless the Tithes Bill is read before Easter. Hon. Members intend to limit their eloquence on the Second Reading in order to secure that object. The Bill is to be discussed for two days; but no sooner had this arrangement been come to than the right hon. Gentleman said—"I must take Friday, and put down the Tithes Bill on that day, in order that I may be able to take Monday for Estimates." I have been unable to discover why the right hon. Gentleman thinks it necessary to have an additional amount of money before Easter. A few weeks ago he asked for a Vote on Account, and took a private Members' day. The Vote was for two months, an excessive term, and that amount might have carried the Government over Easter. If these things occur before Easter the House knows what will take place after Easter; not a single day will be left to private Members. I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be more reasonable when he wants extra time to have Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays? What causes me to hate the House is that hon. Members never can get any definite knowledge of what they are going to do a week in advance. I urge the right hon. Gentleman to have some compassion upon hon. Members, to consider that we are very long-suffering persons, and that he is the master of many legions. He might at least make some arrangement whereby hon. Members could have time to themselves at any rate after 9 o'clock in the evening.

(4.54.) Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I know it is of no use protesting against the Resolution, although I have on the Paper today an important notice, and one the appropriateness of which will cease unless it can be brought on before the Budget Statement is made. I do, however, want to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that he is hardly dealing fairly with private Members. It is said that private Members only indulge in destructive attacks on the Government, and do not help in constructive legislation. I have introduced a small Bill dealing with certain small points of interest, and as to which I was assured by the first Law Officer of the Crown that it met with the approval of the Government; but, notwithstanding that, progress with it has been stopped by a mere notice of an Amendment put on the Paper by one of the followers of the right hon. Gentleman. The Government, by their action in regard to private Members, are reducing Membership of the House almost to a farce, so far as constructive work is concerned.

*(4.56.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken will admit that he has not been unsuccessful in regard to legislation as a private Member, and that the Government have not been unwilling to render him assistance. As to the Motion which the hon. Member has on the Paper, I think that if he will wait until the Chancellor of the Exchequer explains the Budget, he will find that no opportunity has been lost by the postponement of that question. The hon. Gentleman who spoke as the representative of the humble and long-suffering Members of this House complains that he has no definite knowledge of what the House is going to do a week in advance. But may I point out that more than a week in advance I stated to the House that the Tithes Bill must be read a second time

this week, and that Supply would be needed before adjournment for the Easter holidays. I have given as much notice as was possible in the circumstances. The senior Member for Northampton has recommended Morning Sittings for the conduct of public business. I will give the hon. Member an opportunity of supporting a proposal of that kind which I shall make immediately after Easter. I think it is my duty to ask the House to vote Supply as rapidly as it can, consistently with the proper discharge of its duties; and I do not think at any time the House has adjourned at Easter without having made some progress in Supply. I should like to correct one statement which I made a few moments ago. I do not wish it to be inferred that the Committee on the Tithes Bill will necessarily be taken on the 21st April, because the Second Reading of the Land Bill must precede the Committee stage of the Tithes Bill.

(5.1.) Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That the Order for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery and Redemption Bill have precedence, this day, of all Orders of the Day, including the Committee of Supply.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (SATURDAY SITTING).

Resolved, That this House do sit To-morrow at Ten o'clock; and that Mr. Speaker, as soon as he has reported the Royal Assent to the Bills which have been agreed on by both Houses, do adjourn the House without Question put.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

NEGOTIABLE SECURITIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Bill to amend the Law relating to Negotiable Securities, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Sir John Lubbock, Colonel Hill, and Mr. Salt.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 206.]

MARRIAGE (ACTIONS FOR BREACH OF PROMISE) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Roper Lethbridge, Bill to abolish actions for breach of promise of marriage, ordered to be brought in by Sir Roper Lethbridge, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Caine, Dr. Commins, and Colonel Makins.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 207.]

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Cameron, Bill to amend "The Public Houses (Hours of Closing) (Scotland) Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Dr. Cameron, Mr. M'Lagan, Mr. Mark Stewart, and Mr. John Wilson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 208.]

PAROCHIAL BOARDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Cameron, Bill to reform the constitution of Parochial Boards in Scotland, and the mode of electing the Members of such Boards, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Cameron, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Shiress Will, Dr. Farquharson, and Mr. Barclay.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 209.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY AND REDEMPTION BILL.

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [27th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and, at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Picton,*)—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*(5.7.) **Mr. C. W. GRAY** (Maldon): As this question is one of considerable importance to the constituency which I represent, I hope the House will excuse me if I trespass upon its attention for a somewhat longer time than usual, inasmuch as I desire to review the history of the tithes question before I come to the criticisms I have to make—I hope in a thoroughly independent spirit—on the provisions of the Bill which is now before the House. This Bill is by no means the same Bill which was before the House last Session. The hon. Baronet the Member for Horsham (Sir W. Barttelot), said last night that I must of course support this Bill because it contains certain provisions for which I contended last Session, and I cannot but feel the force of that remark. At the same time I must say that this Bill takes entirely different ground in regard to other provisions. The hon. Member for Lanarkshire last night attacked the Bill from a religious point of view, but, as far as I am concerned, I shall deal with the measure entirely from an agricultural point of view. The hon. Mem-

ber for Lanark stated that the Bill would confer no benefit on the tenant farmers. That is a statement with which I cannot agree, and as to which I shall have something further to say at a later period. In order that I may push home the points I wish to make, it will be necessary for me to remind the House of the position of the tithes question prior to the passing of the Commutation Act of 1836. At that period a great deal of irritation had grown up between tithepayers and tithe owners. As long as tithe was collected in kind, it was only natural that continual disputes should arise. It had even occurred that a farmer who was bound to contribute one-tenth of the produce of his land to the clergyman, had sent his flock of ewes on to another farm at the lambing season. That led up to a state of things somewhat similar to that observable now in some parts of England—namely, irritation between the tithe owner and the tithepayer. Every hon. Member on this side of the House agrees that the irritation is to be regretted, and that the Government in bringing the Bill before the House hope to remove every reasonable grievance and cause of irritation. Another reason for the passing of the Act in 1836 was to prevent the tithe owner from participating in the increased production of the land, owing to the increased capital and extra science the farmer brought to bear on the cultivation of the soil. The repeal of the Corn Laws after the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act seriously affected the interests of tithepayers. That was the time when the question of tithe ought to have been taken up by Parliament. I can hardly imagine how the landowners allowed such a change to take place without re-opening the tithe question. Possibly the reason might have been that the advocates of Free Trade told the people of England, and especially the farmers, that the change would not, to any great extent, interfere with the farming interest. It will be in the memory of hon. Members that Mr. Cobden and others, who fought so vigorously the battle of Free Trade, told the landlords and farmers of England over and over again that they would always have the natural protection for their corn produce, which was consequent on the cost of transit upon the corn shipped to this country by foreigners competing with us in our own markets. At that time, this doctrine was regarded as sound and reliable, and it is only of late years that we have found how mistaken was the view thus put before the country. But it may be asked how any relief from foreign competition could be expected from a Tithe Bill. It should be recollected that the scheme of the Commutation Act settled the matter on more than one base. It is true, as the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade had said, that there was a field or farm apportionment which could not be re-opened, because the data upon which it was calculated were gone. This first base was derived from a consideration of what the tithes had been worth on the average, of seven years to the Tithe Receivers. That was the first basis of the legislation introduced by the Commutation Act. The next step was to take an imaginary hundred pounds' worth of tithe, made up of equal quantities of wheat, barley, and oats, and the price of that imaginary hundred pounds' worth was to increase and decrease, as the market prices fluctuated. Why was that barometer set up? I maintain that it was for the sole purpose of showing the capability of the land from which the crops were derived, for paying in the future larger or less sums of money as tithe. For years that barometer worked well; there was very little grumbling, and when the tithepayer and tithe owner met, it was very often over a good bottle of wine. There was no ill-feeling between the two. But then came the time when the barometer ceased to do the work for which it was set up, when it registered the tithes at from 8 to 10 and 12 per cent. above par, while the tithepayer felt that he was paying a sum of money which was not the produce of his business, but was eating into the very capital with which he carried on his business. An hon. Member last night said rather than do anything unfair to the tithe owner he would suffer ruin. I do not come here to ask the House of Commons to save me and my brother yeomen from ruin, if they can only do that by being unfair to the tithe owner; but if the barometer set up has ceased to do the work for which it was intended, I claim the right to ask the House to put something in the place of the barometer, that will act in a fair and equitable manner between the two parties. Last night we heard a great deal of the grievances of the clergy in Wales, and I sympathise with them very deeply. We have heard also that the tithepayers in Wales have a grievance. If so, I sympathise with the farmers there. When it is asked that the law should be strengthened to insist on the payment of a legal debt, I must say that I have no objection to that proposal. But if any step of that sort is taken, to my mind it is a re-opening of the settlement of 1836. If you re-open the settlement of 1836 for one purpose, then I say you must also listen to the demand to open it still wider for another. Last year the Bill brought in by the Government merely seemed to recognise that there was a grievance coming from the tithe owners, but there was no recognition of the grievance of the tithepayer. I then contended that if we re-opened the settlement of 1836 for the benefit of the tithe owners, we must also, at least, go a little further, and say that the landlord should be the person who actually handed over the cash to the tithe owner. The Government, I am glad to say, have adopted that principle, and it is, therefore, impossible for me to be very hostile to the Bill. I will pass to another provision. I contended also last Session that there must be some recognition of those cases where the tithe is greater than the rent. The proposal of the present Bill is that where the tithe is in excess of the rateable value, the landlord shall get redress. My objection to the proposal is this. Very rarely are farms of 300, 400, 500, and 600 acres assessed so low as I consider they ought to be. The reason is that there are wheels within wheels. Yeoman farmers owning land of that description consider the advisability of trying to get their assessment knocked down to the lowest point. In the first place, lowering the assessment would have the effect of raising the poundage which is levied from that assessment. And then, again, farms of this description are frequently mortgaged; and it is not to the interests of these men, farming their land under these conditions, to, using an old phrase, "cry stinking fish" of their own farms too loudly, because that would open the eyes of the mortgagees, and the probability is that, within a very short time, they would receive a letter from the solicitor to the mortgagee asking for a cheque in reduction of the mortgage. When you come to such a state of things as we have in the eastern counties it is very serious. I can say, without hesitation, speaking of the agricultural land of Essex, that the tithe is very nearly half the income derived from that land by the landlord. The barometer I have spoken of must have worked badly when such a state of things has arisen in a county close up to the very suburbs of this great Metropolis. To be a settlement for any length of time the Bill must contain provisions recognising the altered state of things I have alluded to. I am convinced that if the rateable value clause was not written with actual clerical ink, if there be such a commodity, there was a tithe owner not far away when the clause was drafted. That clause will not get the Government out of the difficulty. A good many intricate questions and complications will crop up, and if I have an opportunity in Committee I shall ask the Government whether the Assessment Committees, when making out the assessment of agricultural property for this purpose, will be directed to divide the assessment under two specific heads—one being the value they put on the land and the other being the value they put on the houses and buildings. I hope I am not making a speech that is unduly—I must not say hostile but independent. It is only right I should be frank and fair with the Government. I must acknowledge that they have behaved most handsomely to me. I have not had the slightest pressure put upon me. I am, therefore, enjoying my independence, and when the Bill gets in Committee I shall raise the point to which I have just alluded. In equity, the tithe owner has never had an atom of property in the bricks or wood of which the buildings are composed. ["Hear, hear!"] I am very glad to find I am in that opinion supported by Tory Members, for they, like Cæsar's wife, are beyond suspicion. There is no suspicion as to their idea of rights of property. If we are to be treated fairly on the point, if we are told that it will be admissible to deduct the rateable value of the buildings, I shall begin to look much more favourably upon this clause, which is an innovation from the Bill of last Session. Now, one of the Tithe Bills of the Government proposed to give 5 per cent. to the tithepayer in consideration of the strengthening of the law for the benefit of the tithe owner. There seemed something very fair about that proposition, because in a re-opening of the settlement of 1836 for the benefit of the tithe owner, there ought to be given a *quid pro quo* for the tithepayer. I trust that question will be raised in Committee. I now pass to the redemption clauses. In them we have taken up entirely new ground. It is to the redemption principle that I look for a fair settlement of this very difficult question, and the Bill goes so far in its scope that if it can only be hammered into a reasonable shape when it gets into Committee, it may possibly meet the case from the agricultural point of view. Last night the President of the Board of Trade said the redemption scheme provided in the present Act of Parliament was a dead letter, and I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentlemen that for all practical purposes it has been a dead letter What do the redemption clauses in this Bill do for us? Up to 20s. there is machinery that may possibly be operative, but directly you get beyond that amount we find what, to my mind, will be a complete blank. First of all, before you can move a step the tithe owner and the tithepayer have to meet and agree that they will go in for redemption. I can imagine that, under certain circumstances, they may be able to do that, but that will not advance them much, because they have also to agree what the terms of the redemption are to be. Is there any probability that under existing circumstances any large number of tithe owners and tithepayers will be abie to agree as to the number of years' pruchase and so on? It must be borne in mind that the clerical tithe owner has only a life interest. I know some of them talk about being the Trustees of the Church, and I have no doubt when they say so they speak perfectly conscientiously. There are exceptions, but the great majority of English landlords have met these depressed times in a spirit of fairness that will do them credit as long as the name English landlord lasts. Knowing what has been done by the ordinary landlord, some farmers have approached their landlord No. 2, the clerical tithe owner. In a few cases landlord No. 2 has given a little remission, but I know cases in which the clerical tithe owner has said to the farmer asking for a remission, "My good fellow, I should be only too delighted to give you a remission. It is true I can afford it, for I have got other property, and I should like very much indeed to do what you want, but I cannot do it because I look on tithe as a sort of trust, and it would be unfair to those clergy who have not private property if I were to do it." If these redemption clauses are to be more than dead letters, there must be some pressure brought to bear to bring the two parties together. What the pressure is to be I leave to the Government. [An hon. MEMBER: What would you do?] I am asked by a hon. Gentleman, who is a barrister, what I would propose. I do not think it is fair to ask a yeoman farmer to explain fully on the spur of the moment what sort of a scheme should be adopted. Briefly, I should say there should be some time allowed for redemption. I think it would be well if redemption, when made upon the application of the landlord, were compulsory within a certain number of years from the passing of the Act. I believe that if redemption were made upon fair terms the tithe owner or, I would prefer to say the Church, would derive a great deal of benefit and become a far stronger and more efficient institution for good. Now, the hon. Member for Lanarkshire stated last night that the tenant will get no benefit whatever from the proposed change. I know that theoretically the landlord pays the tithe now, but the tenant has always had to bear the brunt of all disputes as to whether the tithe averages were being properly taken. He will no longer be interested as tenant farmer in anything of that sort, and in that respect he will experience certain relief. I have heard, and I think there is a great deal in it, that if the Bill passes the tenant will benefit by a possible re-arrangement with his landlord. It has been suggested that in many parts of the country land being so unpopular tenants will derive advantage from a new bargain, that is to say, he will not contract in the new arrangement or agreement to give the landlord exactly the same amount extra in rent that the landlord will take upon himself by way of tithe. I believe it is very likely that that will happen in many parts of the country. At any rate no tenant's cow or hay stack can be restrained upon, and he would have no thought as to corn averages and the like. I thank the House for having listened to me so patiently, and I have now only to express the hope that the Bill will be read a second time without a Division. My reason for expressing that hope is that I think the promise of the President of the Board of Trade that all Amendments will be considered with an open mind is one upon which we can thoroughly rely. I believe the Bill can be so amended that it would facilitate fair arrangements of the nature I am pleading for, strengthen the law where it requires strengthening, and give relief where relief can be fairly demanded.

*(5.56.) SIR H. VIVIAN (Swansea District): I think the Government will be convinced by the speech to which we have just listened that they have a very thorny path to follow: that in Committee very serious questions will arise. The hon. Gentleman has said that the reduction in respect to buildings upon farms must lead to a very large reduction in the amount payable for tithe. Once I had the buildings on certain farms of mine valued and I was perfectly amazed at the value set upon them. If buildings are not, as I believe they are not, subject to tithe, they undoubtedly enter into account in the fixing of the rent, and, if you are to assess the value of the tithe upon the rent, you must make very large reduction indeed in respect to the value of the buildings. That alone will largely diminish the income which the owners of tithe will be entitled to. Now, it is admitted that if the Bill is not aimed at Wales it is introduced in view of certain events in Wales. I always regret disturbances, like those which have occurred in some parts of Wales, but it must be borne in mind that the action which was taken by tithe-payers in Wales was intended as a protest against the injustice of the tax they were called upon to pay. They had no desire, and they have no desire, to refuse payment of any just and proper tax. Their object simply was to protest in the most stern and solemn manner against the appropriation of the tax they were required to pay. This Bill proposes that the tax shall be placed upon the shoulders of the landlords instead of upon those of the tenants. That does not relieve the tenant from the payment. He will be bound to pay more rent to his landlord; and the hon. Gentleman (Mr Gray) has just said it is quite certain that a very large addition, if not the whole amount of tithe, will be added to the rent. It may be, and I hope it will be, that, in many cases, landlords will take a more just view of the position than the owners of tithe have up to this time taken. I believe that they will do so, and that will only prove how wrong has been the position of those who have owned tithe up to this time. If, as he believes, in the future landlords will make a considerable reduction in respect to extra rent they have put upon their tenants then that must be, indeed, a condemnation of the course taken hitherto by owners of tithe. I doubt whether rents are too high now; they may be in certain cases, but, at all events, what they will have to consider is whether money paid in respect of tithe is too high, and if they admit deductions from that, that is a distinct condemnation of those who heretofore received these rents. Undoubtedly the machinery will not be so direct as it has been heretofore. I am not so sure that we may not have again the question arising as to the payment of tithe in Wales. There are, happily, many small free-holders in Wales, and few of them are members of the Church of England. They will be called upon to pay tithe in the future as in the past, and it is quite possible that even this Bill will not prevent a recurrence of those lamentable actions which have taken place in Wales on some occasions. The landowners may object to pay the tithe, and it is evident the machinery of the Bill is far more complicated than that hitherto used. Is there anything more odious than the idea of a Receiver being appointed to be the manager of any man's farm? That may mean absolute ruin to the tenant, and is more likely to be so than anything he has encountered up to the present time. The grievance will not be removed. The tenants, though not so directly subject to

the payment of tithe, still will be as sensible as now that the sweat of their brows will go in payment of tithe, and to that they have a conscientious objection. That is the position of tenants in Wales. Bear in mind it is a question of conscience. I am old enough to remember when we had long and acrimonious debates in this House on the subject of Church rates, and at that time one of the most peace-loving Bodies in the community (the Quakers) refused to pay these rates, and in those long and often acrimonious debates, which few Members remember, it was said that Church rates would never be abolished, that it was a thing not to be contemplated. But after these debates there came a time when Church rates were abolished, and I ask are the fabrics of the Church of England in a worse position than before the rates were abolished? I say at no time have the fabrics of our Church been in so magnificent a condition, and why? Because we have to rely on the voluntary system. Of all others there can be no question the voluntary system is the most healthy to rely upon. The prophecies that the fabrics of our churches would fall into decay have all been falsified, and our churches now are the glory and splendour of our country. Well, but the Church has lost its hold upon Welshmen, and that owing to the grievous misuse of its high privileges for a great number of years. It is now something like 1,100 years since the old British Church passed away and was absorbed by the Romish Church. During that lengthened period it is no exaggeration to say Church matters have been in a scandalous condition in the Principality of Wales. During the Romish times, so far as I can read history, the position was a bad one, and it became worse after the Reformation. Nepotism prevailed to the largest extent, and men were sent to minister to the spiritual wants of the Welsh people who had no feeling of sympathy for the people and could not even express themselves in the language of the Welsh people, and by these men the great emoluments of the Church were absorbed. For very many years this led to a condition of things most deplorable, and out of this condition of things the present position of the Church of England in Wales has grown. Stupor prevailed, I will not say irreligion prevailed, but at any rate history shows that a scandalous condition of things prevailed in the Church. The whole revival of the strong religious feeling in Wales began with the Methodist revival at the beginning of the century, and long after that the Church remained in its terrible state of stupor, from the effects of which it has never recovered. I was very much surprised yesterday to hear the hon. Member for East Bradford (Mr. Reed), who has studied this question very deeply, take to task my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Glamorgan (Mr. Evans), whose excellent maiden speech has shown his possession of an ability, and a power in addressing the House, which, I am quite sure, will make him a brilliant Member of it. I was astonished, I say, to hear the hon. Member take my hon. Friend to task for referring to the tripartite division of tithe. I understood the hon. Member to say that no such thing ever existed, that there was no historical warrant for saying that a tripartite division of tithe existed in this country at all. Well, I admit that there is no absolute proof, and doubtless this proof has been lost in the mists of ages. But in that very excellent work, *Ancient Facts and Fictions*, Lord Selborne quotes from an old document of Ethelred's time, about 1014, which runs thus:—

> "Respecting tithe the king and his witan (or Parliament) have chosen and agreed that one third part of the tithe which belongs to the Church shall go to the reparation of the Church, the second part to the servants of God, and the third part to God's poor and needy ones in thraldom."

Doubts of the authenticity have, I know, been thrown upon this document, but it appears to me to bear evidence of truth on the face of it. There you have tripartite division, and what has become of that division? We hear no more of it, the whole is applied to the maintenance of the clergy, and we are accused of sacrilege, or something very much approaching that, for suggesting that it might be applied to other purposes. Lord Selborne, upon the question how it was that the whole of the tithe became appropriated to parish purposes, says—

> "There was certainly no such general appropriation of tithe to parish church made by any law ever enacted in England, though the laws of Ethelred gave to certain churches on private

estates a third of the whole tithe. As to how the third passed into the whole there is not, so far as I know, so much as a canon of any Council or decree of any Pope in the nature of a legislative enactment to explain."

When so great an authority as Lord Selborne cannot explain how the Church became possessed of the whole of the tithe, I think I may say the evidence is lost. Nobody can explain it, or make out a real title to it. I suppose the title is one of prescription. No law or canon gives that title. The hon. Member for East Bradford used the word "British," and, properly speaking, that should refer to Wales only. Great Britain, we know, is a term including the whole of the kingdom, but certainly the British are the Welsh. The Welsh were not conquered until 1284, but the same arrangements existed in the whole Church, for the same Authority governed all the Christian Church. In 777 the ancient British Church was absorbed into the Romish Church. The ecclesiastics at Rome thenceforth governed the whole of the Church of Great Britain although Wales had not been conquered by the Saxons Kings. This is ancient history and, perhaps, I owe an apology for referring to it. I should not have done so but that my hon. Friend (Mr. Evans) was challenged on the point by the hon. Member for East Bradford. It is quite evident that the latter had not paid sufficient attention to the historical question to animadvert on the statement of my hon. Friend. I have a very long experience of Wales. I have been in touch with Welsh feeling through my connection with one of the largest Welsh constituencies for 33 years. For 27 years I represented the largest constituency in the Principality, and for six years I have represented one of the largest. I do not look at Wales from Shropshire through a telescope. I am in constant touch with the people among whom I was bred and born, and I tell you very distinctly that the Church has lost its hold upon the people of Wales. The people of Wales have provided for their own places of religious worship. If they had not done so there would in the great County of Glamorgan have been a state of religious destitution, for the Church is so fettered that it could not meet the growing wants of an increasing population. You have a parochial system, which of all others is the worst and most restricted in regard to increased church accommodation. You have the incumbent of the parish who can come down upon any one who desires to build a church, and insist upon his right to prevent it. But Free Trade has prevailed, thank God, in providing other places of worship. It is unnecessary to quote the enormous sums of money which have been expended by Welsh Nonconformists in erecting and maintaining their own places of religious worship. There are no people in the world so deeply religious as the Welsh people. On the first growth of a village, with the first few houses, they erect a place of public worship, and this they do out of their own hard-earned savings. And yet you still call upon them to pay a further portion of those savings for the maintenance of a Church with which they have nothing in common. This is a grave and grievous wrong, and their refusal to do so is a protest against this wrong. They are a law-abiding, law-loving people, and this I say with perfect certainty. There is, I think, only one other Member of the House who can say he has addressed an assembly of 10,000 Welsh colliers on a mountain side. My hon. Friend the Member for the Rhondda Division stood with me and addressed 10,000 Welsh colliers on a Welsh mountain side more than once. On one occasion I remember addressing them on the question of reform of the House of Lords, and I remember well saying to them—"Now, you are a thoroughly loyal people; give three cheers for the Queen," and every man of them responded heartily. They were very excited about the position of the House of Lords; but I say no more loyal people exist within this realm. But do not try their patience too far; do not put too great a strain upon these law-abiding people. The unanimous cry of Welshmen is for redress of this grievance. Do not attempt to impose new fetters, and seek to rivet this Church upon the people more tightly. The existence of the Church as a Welsh institution cannot be defended, and only by meeting the just demands of the people is to disendow the Church of England in Wales. I have quoted the case of the Church rates, and I would refer to the Irish Church. Have you not been compelled to do justice to Ireland in regard to the great anomaly which existed there? Even to a greater degree the anomaly exists in Wales, and you refuse to redress this grievance, and endeavour to rivet the fetters more tightly. Do not continue such a policy. The cry of Wales is for Disestablishment; you cannot by such a Bill as this repress this cry; you will render it more bitter.

(6.23.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): The hon. Baronet has just told us that he does not look at Wales through a telescope, and I must admit I think he looks at it much more closely, and from the point of view of one who studies the suffrages of Welsh electors with a view to his next return to Parliament. I confess I am surprised at the part Welsh Members have taken in this debate, because, as has been well remarked, it is the condition of things in Wales which has brought this question to a crisis and made legislation necessary. We have been told that the refusal of Welsh people to pay tithe is due to religious motives. I should be loth to say anything against the religious convictions of the Welsh people; and I firmly believe they are a religious and godly people. But I cannot attribute the excesses that have taken place in Wales to religion and philanthropy. I have paid close attention to this anti-tithe agitation, and I have not the least doubt of the lengths the people may be induced to go by a misguided sense of religion and right. There is an instance I do not think has been quoted, of a clergyman newly appointed to an incumbency in Wales, a man of blameless character, against whom nothing could be said. He arrived in his parish suffering under a very serious domestic affliction, and no sooner had he arrived than there was a universal refusal of tithe. The poor incumbent became poorer and poorer; the members of his family suffered acutely from want of nourishment; two of his daughters died; and he was reduced to the last verge of poverty. In this condition, he one day received a hamper and thought that at last some of his parishioners had taken pity upon his unhappy condition. Upon opening the hamper, instead of sorely-needed food, he found it filled with nameless filth, and the message, "Here is food for you." These are the things that have taken place, and will continue, unless a stop is put to them. If you tell me that such excesses arise from the depth of religious convictions then all I can say is: I would not give twopence for religious feeling that prompted such an action as this. The hon. Baronet tells us, as others have told us, that the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England in Wales is the proper remedy for the present state of things. But there is now a Unionist Government in power, which will not think of introducing such legislation as this, and that Government will continue in power for, at any rate, another three years, and perhaps many years longer. What does the hon. Baronet propose should be done in the meanwhile? Does he propose that the tithepayers should keep the tithe in their pockets? If not, he must be a party to some legislation to force them to pay it. The non-payment of tithe must have a most demoralising effect on the Welsh people. But this Bill does not deal with Wales alone, and I desire to refer to the speech that has been delivered by the hon. Member for the Maldon Division, who represents a part of England which has suffered most acutely from the agricultural depression of recent years. The hon. Member committed himself to the assertion that the corn averages which govern the payment of tithe would establish a sort of test of the fertility of the soil.

*MR. GRAY: I must correct the noble Lord there. What I said was that the corn averages would be a test as to the capability of the land to pay a larger or a less tithe.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I apologise to my hon. Friend and adopt his correction, though I cannot assent to the statement. Corn averages were established because it was thought, at the time, that corn was more fixed in value than any other commodity. It might have been fixed on a money basis, but it was thought that the value of gold would vary more than that of corn. That having been the means by which the tithe has been fixed, let us see whether, on the whole, it has worked fairly? I find that, calculating the average of years to the present day, and taking the years altogether, as near as possible £100 is paid for what was fixed at £100 at the time of commutation. In the present year, and during the last few years, of course, it has sunk far below that value, but, taking it all round, the tithe owner has got that which he bargained for at the time of the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act. I do not think, in the face of this fact, that there is reason to make any change in the law on the ground that the tithe owner gets too much. Let us look at the other side of the case. Does the landowner get the same or more or less than at the time of the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act? I will not go into figures, but I will venture to say that, taking the titheable land of England as a whole—of course, Essex is an exception—the landowner has got at least two-thirds more than he had at the time of the passing of the Act, and, therefore, it is not fair to say that he has been prejudiced to the advantage of the tithe owner. The tithe owner has got what he contracted to get, and the landowner has obtained a great deal more. In those circumstances I cannot see that there is any case whatever for a revision of the tithe commutation, and I venture to say that the present Bill is not designed to effect any such revision. The settlement of 1836 is respected by the Bill. I know it is sometimes said that the Bill is a re-opening of that settlement, but I cannot see that a measure designed like this one, to make people pay that which they legally owe, and to enable the tithe owner to more easily recover his debt, is one which re-opens the Tithe Commutation Act. Will the House bear with me a moment whilst I give an illustration? I happen to know a very populous town in the North of England, which is near a great city — within five miles of it. In that town, owing to its proximity to the city, there are no County Court sittings, and I have been concerned lately in trying to persuade Her Majesty's Government—that is to say, the Lord Chancellor—to have County Court sittings in that town. The reason I did this is, because it is found that the creditors in the town in which I am interested are prejudiced by the necessity of having to go five miles away to the city where the County Court sittings are held, in order to get judgment against their debtors. I am informed that so much is this difficulty felt that it positively, in a very serious degree, prejudices the recovery of small debts. Now, supposing the Lord Chancellor grants our request, and agrees that County Court sittings shall be held in this town, the immediate result will be that every small debt there will be more valuable to the creditor. Will the debtor be able to go to the creditor and say, "When I incurred this debt to you I thought I had to go to a town five miles off before it could be enforced against me? Now I find the debt can be enforced in a much easier way. It is not right that you should have all the benefit of the altered arrangements, and seeing that you can enforce the debt with much greater facility than you could before, I claim some remission." No doubt that case is a ridiculous one. ["Hear, hear!" *and laughter.*] But it happens to be so obvious that even hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House can see what I mean. That instance shows very well that the method of recovery of debt has nothing to do with the amount really due, and that if it is found—as it has been found—that it is difficult for the tithe owner, who has the first charge on the produce of the land, to recover his debt, it is a fair and legitimate thing for Parliament to alter the method of recovery without being accused of re-opening the settlement of 1836, and being called on to reduce the debt due. I said at the opening of these few remarks that I had great sympathy with the Counties of Essex and Berkshire, and those counties which have felt so deeply the agricultural distress. Well, the Government have evidently felt that too, and in the Bill they have presented to the House they have considered—as I think, very properly and in a very generous manner—some of the difficulties these distressed counties feel. For instance, there is the important provision that in cases where the rateable value is less than the tithe a remission shall be made to the tithepayer as against the tithe owner. That, under the circumstances, is a generous concession, and it should be fully recognised as such. It is a concession because on a great number of properties the landlords will pay, although they do not get a sufficient rental. It is said that in cases of that kind, the landlords will charge a rent which the tenants will refuse to pay, and the land will go out of cultivation, as the landlords will have to take the land into their own hands, and will find it impracticable to make use of it. If the tithe exceeded the rent there would be no remedy for the tithe owner. But in the great majority of cases there will be a hope that in better years it will be possible to make a profit, and the land will not be allowed to go out of cultivation. I think the landowner should receive assistance in this case, but it should be a concession from the tithe owner. In many cases where the tithe is found to be in excess of the rent the reason is that at the time of the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act the landowners were allowed to apportion the tithe on their properties as they pleased, and they put it on as few farms as possible. Naturally, on those farms the pressure has been felt more than elsewhere; but because the landowner has chosen to put the whole of the tithe on a few farms, is that any reason why, 50 years afterwards, the tithe owner should be called on to suffer loss? That argument no doubt tends to show that the provision in the Government Bill is not fair to the tithe owner. But I think that, under present circumstances, and certainly in view of the difficulties which land is being placed in in the distressed counties, the tithe owner ought to be willing to make some concession in that direction. Let it be understood, however, that these are concessions, and substantial concessions; and many of us think that, having gone that far, we should not be called upon to go further in giving up the tithe owner's rights. Let us look at this thing from a common sense point of view. Hon. Members opposite are not so anxious to relieve the land of tithe as they are anxious to make the tithe question a running sore in order to facilitate their efforts to bring about the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the National Church. But hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House will fight to the death against that object. I say frankly that there is no question in the whole field of politics on which I would not rather make concession than on the question of the endowment of the National Church. That being so, those who strive for Disestablishment will have to look forward to many years of bitter struggle before they meet with success, even if they are ever successful. Are they prepared to allow the tithe question during these years of struggle to remain in its present state? They must consent to legislation of some kind with respect to it, and therefore I would urge them, on grounds of fairness and morality, to give a cordial support to this honest endeavour on the part of the Government to provide a machinery under which, without friction, the tithe may be fairly, honestly, and readily paid to the Church of England, as she has a right to expect, whether in England or in Wales.

*(6.45.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): In the few observations I purpose addressing to the House I would disentangle the Bill from all its verbiage and ask the House to have regard to its main principles. Under the Commutation Act the produce of the land only is liable, and the tithe is only levied in a certain manner on the occupier; but under the present Bill a great change will take place, both in regard to liability and process by the tithe owner. If the landlord does not pay the tithe a Receiver will be put in, and he, the landlord, will become a tenant to the Receiver, who becomes not only Receiver and landlord, but manager also. Then the tithe is to take priority of all other payments, except quit rent. All these are enormous advantages to give to the tithe-owner, and yet there is nothing on the other side to balance them. The whole Commutation Act of 53 years ago is torn to pieces in giving the tithe owner these advantages. In Clause 4 of this Bill the tithe owner is empowered to take the whole of the produce of the land, and divide it as he likes; that is to say, if there happens to be more than one tithe owner they can divide the tithe as they like amongst themselves. The tithe owner, however, is saved the odium of being the collector, and actually the landowner and occupier are bound to advance the money to the tithe owner to pay his local rates and taxes. We heard the right hon. Baronet the President of the Board of Trade express how deeply he respected contracts and former precedents, but here we have the arrangement made in the extraordinary Tithe Redemption Bill, passed only a year or two ago, upset and the contracts made between landlord and tenant broken. Over and over again we have heard how

difficult it is for landlords and tenants to make bargains, and how, when they are made, they ought to be respected. The tithe owner has his taxes paid for him in advance, and yet we have nothing on the other side to set against this extraordinary advantage. I have only to-day received a letter from an eminent land agent who has been long engaged in the buying and selling of tithes, and who has been consulted by an ex-Prime Minister on the subject. He—the land agent—says the Bill is a poorly disguised attempt to increase the value of tithe at the expense of the landowner, but that the tenant farmers are too intelligent not to see that the merging of the tithe in the rent is only a device to remove the odium of collecting tithe from the shoulders of the parson. He adds that the provisions of the Bill will add 10 years' purchase to the market value of tithe rent-charge by raising it from 15 to 25 years' purchase. Then we come to the Redemption Clause. That clause only applies where the tithe is under 20s. Directly you come to a case where it is over 20s. redemption is optional, because a joint application is necessary. Suppose a young clergyman comes into an incumbency, the tithes on which amount to £500 a year, and asks his solicitor for advice. The solicitor would say, "You must be a very foolish man to have the tithe redeemed. You must take into consideration what the tithe rent-charge would be worth at 25 years' purchase. You collect it directly from the landed proprietor, and you have the best security. The landed proprietor pays your local rates and taxes in advance. You are a young man, and by the time you have lived in the parish for 30 or 40 years it will be very difficult to prove what the value of the tithe was before this Bill passed. If the redemption takes place then you will get double what you would get now." That is what the solicitor would say, and a very sensible and reasonable thing it would be to say. Personally, I am both a tithepayer and a tithe owner. My predecessors in title, who purchased the tithe rent-charge from the Crown, it having formed a portion of the estate of that unfortunate nobleman, Lord Derwentwater, never spent a farthing on the land, on which the tithe was charged, nor have I done so, as the land does not belong to me. In my view the tithe owner in England stands in the same position as a bad Irish landlord who does nothing at all to improve the land, and the tithepayer is in the same position as a tenant in Ireland who has made all the improvements. Within the last 50 years two-thirds of Great Britain has been drained, land has been manured, and waste land brought under cultivation. All has been done by the tenant and the landowner, the tithe owner never spending a farthing. This Bill may well be compared with that relating to the purchase of land in Ireland, and we may well ask: Why should we be so generous to Irish landlords who have neglected their duty, and adopt a policy of spoliation towards English landowners who have done their duty to the best of their ability? I do not see why Clause 9 should require that the redemption for the price named should be "for the permanent benefit of the benefice." It would be enough to ensure that the redemption should not be detrimental to the benefice. With regard to the Receiver, I would ask the House to consider for a moment what would be the position of a Receiver in a small country village. Could a more ingenious plan be devised for getting up hot blood and provoking riot than putting in a Receiver to manage a farm and collect the parson's tithe? Then in Clause 12 the Bill goes on to provide that "if the owner fails to perform such duty," &c., not only he, but his executors and administrators, shall be liable to pay any subsequent owner of the land, or any part thereof, all expenses incurred by such owner in respect of tithe redemption. I never heard of such a clause: it is a punishment clause of unlimited duration. Again, Clause 13 empowers the Board of Agriculture to put a mortgage on the land. All recent legislation has been in the direction of trying to free the land, and thereby to reduce the law costs in land sales; therefore I say that this proposal is a step in the wrong direction. I can only see two courses open to us. Either we must repeal the Commutation Act altogether and find out the present real commercial value of the tithe and start on a fresh basis, or if the Government are determined to get rid of the tithes let them bring in a compulsory clause, providing for redemption at 15 years' purchase, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to find the necessary money on the same terms as are offered to the Irish tenants, namely, at 4 per cent. for 49 years. As to the proceeds of the sale, one-third should go to the Church, one-third be devoted to educational purposes, and one-third should go in reduction of the rates. I think that, without doubt, the Church has improperly absorbed the whole of the tithe. As a member of the Church I blushed to hear Gentlemen on the Front Bench opposite declare that clergymen of the Church of England in Wales had, with their families, been on the very verge of starvation. What were their congregations doing to allow their ministers to starve in consequence of this tithe difficulty?

(7.8.) MR. T. LEWIS (Anglesey): It is now being generally acknowledged that the occasion of promoting this Bill was the tithe agitation in Wales. As I have spent my whole life among the tithepayers in that country, I have had every opportunity of knowing their opinion and feelings upon the tithe question, and I can assure the House that the passing of this Bill will not, in any degree, pacify or satisfy them. Hitherto, the relations between tenants and landlords in Wales have been most amicable, but I am afraid if this Bill is passed, necessitating in many cases the re-adjustment of rents, it will occasion much irritation and ill-feeling. Indeed, it does not seem likely to give satisfaction to any class in the Principality—neither the farmers nor the landowners. A few months ago, in consequence of the general rumour that the forthcoming Tithe Bill would throw the payment of tithes on the landlord, a number of influential landowners from the adjacent counties, met at Rhyl, in North Wales, to consider the subject; and the result of their deliberation was to pass a resolution to the effect that no such Bill was required for Wales, but that what was wanted was a Bill to expel, cheaply and effectually, all lazy and troublesome clergy from their ministerial office. And I firmly believe that that is the opinion of a large number of other landowners who were absent. As to the tithepayers, this Bill will not satisfy them, because, though the landlord in the first instance is made responsible for its payment, yet the farmers well know that it will finally fall upon them. It is well that the House should know that no Tithe Bill will give satisfaction to the very great majority of the Welsh farmers, except a Bill to devote the tithe to national purposes; as long as the tithe is used for the support of a small religious sect, the agitation and dissatisfaction will continue. It is not against the payment of tithes that the Welsh farmers object, but against its application. After all the efforts and sacrifices made by Nonconformists during the last 150 years to support religious instruction in Wales, which was almost wholly neglected by the Church, surely they deserve better treatment than to be saddled, in addition, with these proposed extra County Court expenses. Lord Aberdare declared some time ago—

> "That religion would have disappeared from the country had it not been for the exertions of the Nonconformists."

The late Dean of Bangor, speaking of the enormous numerical preponderance of Nonconformists, said—

> "Statistical apologists will hint that these Nonconformists exist only on paper. Paper adherents do not give money. The Welsh Nonconformists give far more than £300,000 a year."

Also he added—

> "The Church in Wales has lost five-sixths of the Welsh-speaking people, and her strength survives among the English-speaking upper and upper middle class."

In the County of Anglesey, which I have the honour to represent, there are several parishes where none but the clergyman, the clerk, and their families attend the church, while most of the inhabitants go to chapels. It is not, therefore, so very strange that the Nonconformist farmers object to pay tithes, seeing that they receive no benefit whatever for their money. I do, therefore, hope that this House will reject the Bill.

(7.15.) SIR J. KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): I desire to offer a few remarks to the House on this subject. The question of tithes has been for a long period before Parliament, and various Bills have been introduced dealing with it, but of all those Bills none have dealt so completely and fully with it as the measure before us, and certainly none of them have seemed to have anything like the general acceptance which this measure has found. I think that the Government deserve credit for taking up and dealing with the question, for it is not a popular one. They have been told that they cannot touch it without raising many difficult and anxious questions which might really lead them into trouble, but they have acted in accordance with their high sense of duty. In that action they have, no doubt, been stimulated by the state of things which existed in Wales, and which I am amazed that hon. Gentleman opposite seem to contemplate with very little concern—I refer to the non-payment of tithes legally due to an amount so great as was mentioned by the President of the Board of Trade. It is extraordinary that the non-payment of £10,000 out of £38,000 should be regarded as a light matter, particularly when the legal obligation to pay has existed for so very long a time. Another factor which has, no doubt, had its influence with the Government is to be found in the sufferings of the Welsh clergy, who undertook their duties in the belief that the law would secure to them that which they were legally entitled to, though no more. And there is also before the Government this even stronger point—the refusal to meet legal obligations, such as tithe, though it may be treated with equanimity by those who do not suffer, yet is likely to be very contagious; and when once it is found that legal obligations of one sort can be avoided, it is very probable that the same thing will be attempted with regard to other obligations, with the result that the foundations of society will be disturbed, and law and order be shaken very considerably. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has stated that the measure will not satisfy the tithepayers of Wales. I do not suppose it will, because the Welsh tithepayers welcome the tithe agitation as helping them in their efforts to obtain the Disestablishment of the Church. The right hon. Gentleman who spoke for the Front Opposition Bench yesterday (Mr. Osborne Morgan) stated that they did not want a measure to improve the collection of tithes, but one to deal with its distribution. No doubt some hon. Gentlemen opposite and we who sit on these Benches are not likely to agree on the matter, and I do not suppose that those hon. Gentlemen can expect that a Bill likely to please them would be introduced by the present Government. But the means by which it is sought to enforce the law having been found incapable of application in a country where there is not much sympathy with the law in that particular respect, it becomes clear to the Government that something must be done to amend that law, for the sake of their reputation and to put matters straight. In England there has been very little agitation, comparatively, but still there have been grumblings, and, from time to time, pressure has been brought to bear upon the tithe owner to make a furthur reduction. But I think my hon. Friend the Member for the Maldon Division of Essex was rather hard on the clergy just now when he spoke of them as buttoning up their pockets and declaring that though they would be glad to make a reduction, yet for the sake of their order they could not do so. The hon. Member quite left out of sight the fact that there has already been a reduction of 22 per cent., which the clergy have had to bear, and are bearing without complaint, and it seems to me most unreasonable and unfair to ascribe their unwillingness to put in force the unpopular remedy of distraint to anything else than kindness of heart; neither is it fair to ask them to make further reductions As I said before, the Government were pledged to deal with this matter, and have had the courage of their opinions. They have, no doubt, also avoided some of the blots which were certainly to be found in previous Bills, and especially that one which made the tithepayer personally responsible for the tithe. Now it is made quite clear that he is only liable for that which he gets from the titheable land itself, and that, I think, will remove one serious objection which has been felt to previous attempts at legislation on this subject. Then there is the question of re-valuation. Disappointment has been expressed because the Bill does not, beyond the fixing of a new rateable value, give any further power of re-valuation. No doubt, in some few counties—I am happy to say not in very many—the present settlement presses very hardly upon agriculturalists indeed; but we must remember that a bargain was made in 1836, and if we are to re-open that bargain because one party suffers, it would be necessary to re-open the question altogether, and to give benefits to the tithe owner in cases where the land has increased in value, as it no doubt has done in many parts of the country. If that is done, and tithe should be reduced in certain parts of the country, we introduce a principle which it was the boast that the settlement of 1836 had effected, namely, the abolition of growing tithes. Therefore, it seems to me very clear that there is a hardship where the value of the land has fallen more than the 22 per cent. reduction in the tithe, but such cases as that can only be met by the 2nd clause of this Bill, which is an honest attempt to deal with the difficulty. Again, if we re-open the question of tithe averages we shall be confronted with a very difficult problem, because there are other articles besides wheat, such as wool and hay, which have risen in value. We might, perhaps, have hoped that more would have been done in the way of redemption, but it is possible that some amendment in that direction may be devised in Committee. The whole question is, however, surrounded with difficulties, because each party puts the price very much higher or very much lower than the other, according to the point of view from which he looks at it. I particularly rejoice to see that compulsory redemption is enforced in the case of building land, for it has in the past been the cause of considerable trouble and annoyance. We must realise that anything we can do will be sure to meet with the opposition of hon. Gentlemen opposite, who find this tithe grievance a lever for pressing forward the Disestablishment proposals, about which they are so anxious. It has been said that the tithepayers object to pay this tithe because they disapprove of it and it goes against their consciences. I do not quite see the force of that argument, because they do not refuse to pay the tithe altogether; they only refuse to pay unless a reduction is granted. In the times of the agitation against Church rates those who objected to the rates refused to pay them on principle, but this question of a conscience which can be satisfied with a reduction of 5 per cent. I cannot understand. A further reduction of 5 per cent. for collection has been spoken of, but when we remember how very great the fall in the value of tithe has been—22 per cent.—it cannot be right to ask the clergy to submit to a further reduction of 5 per cent. on their already attenuated incomes, more especially as there are already so many cases in which the tithe is paid by the landlord. I do trust we shall be able to bring this question to a satisfactory settlement, and I think we on these Benches should be unworthy of our position of supporters of law and order, and of the National Church, if we did not persevere in the attempt, not to give that Church any fresh advantages, but to preserve those rights which have belonged to her for so many years.

(7.30.) Colonel W. CORNWALLIS WEST (Denbigh, W.): This question has been argued by hon. Members sitting on this (the Opposition) side of the House as if it were purely a matter of Welsh opinion, and my hon. Colleagues from Wales have taken a somewhat provincial and narrow-minded view of the subject. I have been sojourning during the last few weeks among those who are deeply interested in the tithes question, and I have been much surprised at some of the stories I have heard. I look on this Tithes Bill not only as a measure relating to the Principality of Wales, and directed against the Disestablishment of the Church, but as one closely related to the agricultural interest all over the country. What is it we find? We find that in the County of Norfolk the tithes are greater than in the entire Principality of Wales, and I think the people of that county have quite as much interest in this Bill, if not more, than the whole population of the Principality. I think that this Bill will, as far as I can judge of it, bring about a better condition of things as regards the agricultural interest in England. I intend to support the Second Reading of the Bill, and, in doing so, I may be allowed to say that I consider the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade in introducing it was most courteous and conciliatory, especially when we remember that he told the House that any recommendations emanating from this side would, so long as they did not touch the principle of the Bill, receive the careful attention of the Government. I believe that if the Bill is read a second time this evening we shall be able in Committee to introduce such changes as will, at least, settle the question for a certain time to come. The main principle of the Bill is one of which no one will deny the importance—it is to transfer from the shoulders of the tenant farmer to those of the owner the liability for the payment of tithes. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby last year said he regarded this as the proper principle to act upon, and I think so too. But we are told that if the landlords are to pay the tithes they will take care that the tenants shall repay them in the rent. Well, Sir, I for one will take the chances of this. I believe the tenant farmers of Wales are honest men, and that the greater portion of them will not attempt to shirk the responsibility they undertook when they entered into possession of their farms. It is very unfortunate that this question in Wales has got entangled with the question of religion. After all, tithes must be paid, and I think my Welsh Colleagues are inconsistent in opposing the Bill, because it will make tithes a much better property. They ought rather to support the Bill, because they may utilise the tithe in time to come for other purposes, and this Bill will give a better security to the tithe owner whenever it may be required for those national purposes of which we hear so much. I conceive also that the redemption of the tithe is the second great principle of the Bill; and it is one I have always advocated. I do hope and trust that Her Majesty's Government may see their way to put the redemption on easier terms. I cannot understand why, when Consols are as low as they are now, we should be asked to pay 4 per cent., and in my opinion the redemption scheme can be carried out on a plan much less expensive to the landowners than that which is proposed by the Bill. I have always considered that the incidence of tithes is certainly unfair; but, on the other hand, I see the difficulty there is in re-opening the settlement of 1836; at the same time I have always thought that before the Government touched this question perhaps the wisest course to have pursued would have been to appoint a Royal Commission to visit every county, and to consider the condition in which certain counties are placed by reason of the changed condition of agriculture throughout the whole country. I can hardly conceive that the English public are aware of the frightful condition of some of the farms on which the tithe at the present moment is actually more than the rental. I think that the substitution of the County Court for the present system of distress is a proposal which cannot fail to meet the views of all hon. Members, and that the carrying out of this plan would conduce to the peace and the happiness of the country. We know that there are those who wish to keep up a state of things, which we all deplore, for particular purposes of their own, and I trust that their wings will be clipped and that it will be impossible to have again such an agitation as we have had in my country. I think the more sensible and rational of the Welsh farmers will feel that the settlement of the tithe question ought to put aside all further agitation in regard to Disestablishment, and that the effect of this measure will be to preserve the tithe not only for the Church in Wales, but for any future purpose of a national character.

*(7.40.) MR. RANDELL (Glamorgan, Gower): I desire, Sir, to state what I believe to be the opinion of the great majority of my constituents on the subject now before the House. I am astonished at some of the observations of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, especially so as he is one of the Representatives of the Principality. He has complained that the Welsh Members have treated this matter from a provincial point of view; but if by that he meant a Welsh point of view, I could understand his argument, because this is strictly a Welsh question. The hon. Member also spoke of the Bill being of great service to the agricultural interest. If so, I would be pleased, though I doubt it; but the Bill ought to be confined to England. The Bill proposes to shift the burden of the present payment of tithe from the tithepayer to the landlord, and neither in that nor in the redemption clauses, nor in the new method of recovery in lieu of the old form of distress, will it meet with anything but the strongest objection on the part of the Welsh people. The new form of recovery is nothing but an attempt to coerce the Welsh people to pay a tithe which they object to pay so long as the impost is

applied to its present purposes. The proposal to shift the payment is something thrown out with a view to the conciliation of the English farmer, but I hope the English farmer will not be deluded by proposals so fictitious. The Welsh farmer has been taught, and knows quite well, that if the landlord pays the tithe he will exact an equivalent from the tenant in the shape of increased rent. With regard to the redemption clauses the bulk of the Welsh Members are opposed to them altogether. We believe that under them tithes will be frittered away, and that by subsequent alienation they will be lost sight of altogether. We recognise tithes to be national property, and are anxious to keep them intact and apply them to national purposes, educational and otherwise. To that extent the farmer would be relieved, because what he pays in tithes he knows he will be saved in rates. As to the alleged right to the tithe for the purposes of the Established Church, I hold that what Parliament has a right to make Parliament has also a right to unmake. By shifting the burden from one shoulder to the other, you do not remove it. And if you insist upon doing this, then, I think, in all fairness, we may ask you to confer extended jurisdiction upon the County Court, so that the rents of the tenants may be judicially revised, as their rents will most assuredly be consequently increased. In recent years many large estates have been put into the market, and hundreds of tenant farmers have purchased their holdings, and are now freeholders. These men are chiefly Nonconformists, and they will as stoutly oppose the payment of tithe in the future as in the past until fairly appropriated. Then you will simply put in a number of Receivers of the County Court, and in that way practically confiscate their holdings. What is the object of the new method of recovery? I take it that it is to assist the Welsh clergy to recover their tithes. Had it not been for the case of the Welsh clergy I think the other questions that have been raised in this Bill would have been referred to a Royal Commission. Will this Bill have the effect of assisting the Welsh clergy? I think it will have the opposite effect, and that it will only accentuate the differences and further embitter the feelings which already exist. Distress is at present levied upon the goods of the farmer, while the person of the parson is removed from the scene of action. The bailiffs and emergency men do the disagreeable work of collection. But under this Bill you make the clerical tithe owner a plaintiff in the County Court, where he will be sure to attract the attention of the industrial classes, who will be amazed at the strange spectacle of a minister of religion in a Court of Law demanding his pound of flesh from needy men who object, not to the payment of tithe, but to its misapplication. This new jurisdiction which you seek to confer upon the County Court will overweight its machinery and throw it out of gear. Already, there are complaints as to the bailiffs of County Courts not being able to do their duty in the matter of executions following judgment. Besides, solicitors and counsel will be employed, and such will be the legal paraphernalia, that to recover £5 of tithes it may easily be that £10, £15, or £20 will be expended in costs. I am glad the Government do not seek to re-introduce the penal powers which appeared in their last Bill. I do not say this with a view to encourage them to insert powers of that kind. I do not suppose that any Government would venture to imprison men who refused payment of tithes on conscientious grounds; but I say that without imprisonment clauses the Bill will be a dead letter. The County Court process is a double-edged weapon, and I think that while it will wound the victim, it will also wound the hand that strikes.

*(7.50.) MR. BEADEL (Chelmsford): Mr. Speaker, it is a mistake to suppose that any Bill would satisfy hon. Members opposite unless it abolished tithes altogether. The Bill is for the purpose of amending difficulties which have arisen under the Act of 1836—an Act which was passed for changing that which was an uncertainty into a certainty. It created a rent charge as certain as any charge which might be made on private property, subject only to septennial averages of corn. I should have been glad if the Government had not touched that measure at all, but the necessity has arisen from the terrible state of agricultural depression. If hon. Members would

study the agricultural question they would realise the importance of putting it in a better position. They would take steps to cause the produce of the land to be worth more than the cost of production; would confer a great amount of good upon the whole nation, and overcome crotchets which exist in the minds of many. Unfortunately, there are thousands of acres which if absolutely tithe free the cost of production would exceed the value of the produce. That proceeds from only one cause; and, I think if the President of the Board of Trade were to take the Minister of Agriculture into his confidence, a remedy could be found. The President of the Board of Trade is taking a very wise and prudent step in trying to minimise the evils of the tithe system and in endeavouring to prevent the question cropping up again within short periods. I have always acted upon the principle that the tithe should be paid directly by the landlord, and that the clerical tithe owner should not be placed in the position of having to dun his parishioners for his daily bread. Therefore, I welcome the proposal which changes the payment from the tenant to payment by the landlord. With regard to redemption, I think it is better to get rid of small sums. I remember the time when tithe was 12 per cent. above par, and when it was paid with the greatest pleasure in the world; but now that it is 22 per cent. below par nobody likes to pay it at all. There is clearly something wrong in our system. I realise the true cause, and if hon. Members would take care not to allow articles to be sent into this country to compete with our produce, they would confer an enormous benefit on the community; you would hear no more of the tithe rent-charge difficulty, and you would find the National Church of this country in a very happy and contented state. (7.55.)

(8.32.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

(8.35.) MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I was very much struck and amused by the remark of the hon. Member for Denbigh (Colonel West) that the introduction of this Bill would bring peace to Wales. It seems strange to me that anyone should entertain the idea that the introduction of the process of the County Court into tithe collection will bring peace to any part of the country, much less to Wales. I was also very much amused by the statement of the noble Lord the Member for the Darwen Division (Viscount Cranborne) that he and his Party were fighting this question of tithe on this ground—that they mean to fight to the death the question of Church and State. He and his Party have fought to the death a good many questions, and they have always been worsted. They fought to the death against reform, against the abolition of slavery, against Free Trade, against Nonconformists having any social or political position, and they have been worsted in all the fights; and they will be worsted in the fight in which they are now engaged. Then I was amused at the noble Lord saying he depended upon the Unionist majority to defend the Church Establishment, because the present Unionist majority numbers amongst its ranks those who have said the most bitter things against the State Church, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) for instance. I listened with attention to the speech of my right hon. Colleague (Sir M. Hicks Beach) in which he introduced the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman admitted in his earlier sentences that the subject was difficult and complicated. I entirely agree with him, but I cannot see that the Bill grapples with the difficulties or unravels the complications. There are three Parties to be considered in this matter; and my complaint is that the Bill, as Tory legislation generally does, only takes one Party into view. I contend that tithe property is national property devoted for the time being to the interests of a sect, but the time will assuredly come when the nation will appropriate it to something more national than a sect. Last night the noble Lord the Member for the Petersfield Division (Viscount Wolmer) spoke very pathetically against meddling with the tithe question in any tinkering way, and he reminded us that in the settlement of 1836 the nation lost two millions sterling at least. His argument was that we must do what we can to strengthen the position of the property, but I maintain that this interference with the tithe question to-day is going to lead to a good deal of frittering away of this national property. Hon. Gentlemen opposite profess to love the clergy. It is quite evident that they love themselves, because the burthen of all their speeches on this measure has been, a considerable reduction of the sum to be paid. Let me remind hon. Gentlemen that in the settlement of the tithe question at the Reformation, more than 25 per cent. of the tithe got lost by being appropriated not to the clergy, but to the landed interest of the country. The whole of this discussion goes to show that the great object the landed sections of the House have in view is to lessen the burden which presses upon them. I am a large tithepayer, but I do not want a Bill that will lessen the amount I have to pay. What I desire is that the payment should be diverted to some great national purposes; and I will not join hon. Gentlemen opposite in the endeavour to lessen the value of tithe in order to suit their own selfish purposes. Now, one of the Government's great boasts is that they are the farmers' friends. The hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) was exceedingly candid last night when he asked why should the farmers have any relief. I say because the Government and the Conservative Party have always assured the farmer that they are the men who are looking after his interest. Here is a Tithe Bill, and I can find nothing in the Bill that will to any appreciable extent benefit the farmer. I find that the collection of tithe is to be brought under the same operation of law as rent, and the new process of collection will cost him four or five times as much as the old process. If the farmer does not get any more practical relief than this Bill gives him he will get very little. The next party in the question are the clergy, and I admit the Bill does something for them. An hon. Gentleman has said the Bill will increase the value of tithe from 15 to 25 per cent. I can hardly agree with that; but if that is so the measure will benefit the clergy at the expense of the nation, and therefore ought to be fought tooth-and-nail. Then I have been struck with another thing. The Government and the Party opposite are always pleading the sacredness of contracts. Contracts are always sacred when they want to get something out of the bargain. There was a sacred contract made in 1836. Part of that contract was that you should not collect tithe except upon the crops that grow on the particular land that is titheable. But this Bill alters the whole thing. Where is the sacredness of contract? Where are your religious ideas of contract? I am aware that the Welsh clergy are labouring under considerable difficulty, but the difficulty arises from the fact that they depend upon what is not voluntary, but exacted. The President of the Board of Trade, when he was introducing the Bill, seemed to regard the Church and Christianity as synonymous terms. The greatest triumphs of Christianity were made in the early centuries, when tithes, if paid at all, were paid as voluntary offerings. Nowadays the clergy are always telling us that we are to have more in Heaven than on earth; but I find that when we come to anything like tithe, they think quite as much about earth as anything else. The President of the Board of Trade referred pathetically to the poverty of the clergy in Wales. Is it not a disgrace to a Church so wealthy, to a landed aristocracy so rich—and generally the aristocracy are members of the Church—that the clergy are so poor? Did it not strike the right hon. Gentleman that, when he was speaking of the poverty of the Welsh clergy, he was condemning his own Church and Party, in a way I should be ashamed to do? Then it is said we are trying to evade a just debt. It strikes me that comes with bad grace, considering that it is hurled at people who are supporting their own system of religion, and ask for nothing. We do not want to get rid of the payment of tithe at all, but we want to put tithe into a path where it will promote the best interests of the country. The farmers ought to know that no relief to any appreciable extent will come to them by the lessening of tithe. We want to get them relief by appropriating tithe in such a way as will save their pockets in other directions. I contend there is no confiscation in that, because, of the original tithe, as much belonged to the poor as to the clergy. How the clergy have got hold of it is rather singular to me. Some of us maintain that tithe ought to be appropriated to the relief of the poor. That would relieve the poor rate, and would be a practical way of helping the farmers. This is about the only country in the world in which there is tithe. There are two things you have never been able to transplant to any of our Colonies—a State Church and the present landed system of this country —and depend upon it, when a system cannot be transplanted, it is doomed. As you could not transplant a State Church to America and the Colonies, you will not be able to keep it here very long. And there is quite as much Christianity in the Colonies and America, where there is no State Church, as there is in this country. Then get rid of the idea that tithe has anything to do with the religion of the country. Let us clear our minds of cant and humbug. Let us recognise the fact that this is simply an attempt to keep the property of the nation in the hands of a few people. I am told that our arguments are based upon opposition to the Church. I have no opposition to the Church as a religious institution. I hope I have a solemn belief that the future of our country, as indeed the future of the world, depends upon the promotion of Christianity; but, on the other hand, I believe nothing has kept Christianity back so much as tithes and Church rates, which you have endeavoured to prop up. I venture to warn the Government that in endeavouring to tinker with great questions like this they are endangering the very object they have at heart. The noble Lord the Member for the Darwen Division said you have three years to live. The country is beginning to find you out, and only want an opportunity to put you to rout. [Mr. ADDISON: Hear, hear.] I think that, much as we value the presence of the hon. Gentleman who sits by the vote of the Mayor, we shall be without it after the next election. In conclusion, I have only to say that if the Government deal with the question at all, I wish they would deal with it in a generous spirit to the farmer, in a just spirit to the nation, and in a statesmanlike spirit to us all. They have only had regard for the clergy, and by that they will, I hope, deprive themselves of a good deal of support from the farmers. We certainly shall let the farmers know who their friends are, and who it is who come here under the pretence of being their friends, and then support a Tithe Bill which carries them into the County Court and heaps far more costs upon them in the collection of tithe than ever before.

*(8.55.) MR. H. R. FARQUHARSON (Dorset, W.): There is a notice of Motion on the Paper in my name, but I am not anxious to move it on account of the very conciliatory speech we listened to last night from the President of the Board of Trade. The debate seems to have taken a triangular form. There are those who are anxious to do away with tithe in connection with the Church. There are those who are anxious to give to the full, and, in my opinion, more than the full, to the tithe owner; and, lastly, there are those who think, as I do, that some compromise ought to be made in the matter. I am very well satisfied with the Bill in many respects. I am very pleased that the landlords are to pay the tithe in future, because I am quite certain from my experience of tenant farmers, and it is considerable, that it is the wish of the tenant-farmers of the country that they should be relieved from the payment of tithe. Again, I welcome the arrangement for the recovery of tithe, because I think it will save a great deal of unpleasantness. I do not believe for a moment that the Government intend that the Receiver or the manager is to become a farm bailiff, and take the management of the farm out of the hands of the farmer. The Receiver will simply receive the rents which otherwise would go to the landlord. That is a very fair proposal, and one which I think will save a great deal of trouble. But when I come to the question as between tithe owner and tithepayer, I am very much opposed to the Bill, because whatever hon. Members may say, this is a re-opening of the settlement under the Tithe Commutation Act, 1836, and it is a re-opening of it in two ways. In the first place, you are making what was permissive under that Bill compulsory as regards payment of tithe by landlords, and you are substituting recovery by seizing the rents from recovery by distraint. The noble Lord the Member for the Darwen Division (Viscount Cranborne) told us that we have no right to complain, and he gave us instances of certain debtors in a town where there is no County Court. He

said those debtors would have no right to complain if a County Court was set in motion in that town. But that is not the question at all. As I view the matter, there was a special contract arrived at in 1836 between the tithe owner and the tithepayer. On the one hand, it was settled how the payment should be made, and on what that payment should be based. On the other hand, it was settled that there should be certain specified modes of recovery. That seems to be a widely different thing to the instance given by the noble Lord. I object to this re-opening of the settlement of the Tithe Commutation Act, 1836, on behalf of one party only to the bargain. I think if the settlement is re-opened at all, it should be re-opened in the interest of both parties. I may say the Government have re-opened it on a remarkably tender point in regard to tithepayers. We do not object to pay tithe. English yeomen and landlords have never objected to it, but what we do say is that the amount of it we are asked to pay is unduly, improperly high; and we think that before the Government give tithe owners greater power for collecting their debt, it is their bounden duty to take care that the amount recoverable is not more than can justly be claimed. It is quite useless for the Government to think that by merely shifting the burden from the tenant to the landlord they can escape all further difficulty. In Wales, we are told, the payment of tithe is objected to from religious motives, but I am not at all disposed to credit that statement. I do not think it is entirely the case, and I should not have sympathy with the Welsh people if it was the case. That a man should decline to pay from religious motives is a strange motive to put forward; it is about on a par with a Liberal politician declining to pay taxes when a Tory Government is in office. I do not think it is the case. I have read the evidence as to the origin of the tithe riots in Wales, and the reason almost universally given was that farmers objected to the tithe because, instead of being a tenth, it was in many cases a quarter or even a half. We have had tithe troubles in Hampshire, and and there I believe the troubles arose with the landowners. The Bill itself, I think, points to the fact that too much tithe is demanded, because we find in the Bill a clause making provision for a re-adjustment in those cases where the tithe exceeds the amount, the whole of the profit derived from the cultivation of the land. I cannot understand how anybody can suppose a man can come, and asking for a so-called tenth, have a right to claim more than the whole. Tithe is a misnomer in many cases. It is certain that tithepayers are suffering from an injustice, and the Bill proposes to stereotype and perpetuate this injustice, and, therefore, I think that tithepayers have a right to ask the House for some concession before they pass this Bill. It is all very well for hon. Members to twit the landlords upon the wish to pay less, but would not any man object to pay more than he would be properly required to pay? We do not ask to pay less for any other reason than that we think an unjust demand is made upon us. Then, I should like to call the attention of the Government to the effect upon agriculture of the present system of tithe collection and tithe paying. You have in Hampshire, in Essex, in Berkshire, and in many parts of the country, tithes exceeding in amount the value of the profits derived from the cultivation of the lands upon which the tithe is levied. And what does this mean? It means that the landlords are unable or unwilling to lay out a single farthing in repairs on buildings, or in keeping the property in proper order; that you have tenants discouraged from cultivation, and the land grows worse instead of better; and it necessarily follows that labourers lose employment, and so the Church grows more and more unpopular, being considered the primary cause of the trouble. This in itself should be a reason to induce the Government to make considerable concessions, especially in cases where we have the tithe equalling or exceeding the whole of the profits derived from cultivation. We are asked to suppose that the clause, providing that tithe owners shall have no greater claim than the amount of the profits is a concession to tithepayers; but it is impossible under this Bill that it should be arranged otherwise, for the Bill proposes that the new way of recovery of tithe shall be seizing on the rent or profits, and it is perfectly clear that the tithe owner could not recover more than the rent, so it is a necessary consequence of the method of recovery proposed, and I do not consider it is a concession to tithepayers; and if it is so considered, it is not sufficient. I think that where the tithe exceeds the whole of the profit, a much more considerable concession may justly be asked. The point I wish to make is this: it is perfectly clear that if the tithe has become more than the whole, that the machinery for ascertaining the amount of tithe due must be out of order. I will not go into the whole question of corn averages; but I should like to point out that, under the present system, the lower corn falls the more faulty becomes the machinery. In the Tithe Commutation Act it is provided that the amount of tithe payable shall be calculated on the average price of British-grown corn sold in certain markets. When wheat is at 50s. a quarter, then farmers send two or three qualities of corn to market, and the average is taken over the whole; but when wheat falls to 28s., the farmer only sends his best sample, not offering the second and third qualities; so that when the tithepayer can least afford to pay it, the tithe is high, being calculated not on the value of the whole crop, but on the value of the picked samples which alone are sent to market. Here, I think, we have a grievance that deserves inquiry. I daresay we shall be told it is impossible to re-open the whole question of tithe and corn averages, but that is not the point. The tithe owners say, "alter our method of recovery," and while we acquiesce in that, we say alter also the Act in another detail on our behalf. We do not ask to have the whole basis of corn averages altered; we ask merely for an alteration of the present system of ascertaining the value of British-grown corn. If that is done, I am certain the tithe will be lowered considerably, and we shall escape from the difficulty of having land where the tithe exceeds the profit. We shall be reminded of the difficulties, and that a Committee have reported on the almost impossibility of interfering with the corn averages. It may be so; and if it is so, and the Government wish to shirk the difficult and almost impossible task, then we ask them to extend to tithepayers some advantage in the Redemption Clauses of the Bill. As I understand these clauses, they are at present absolutely unworkable and impracticable. I do not think you will find a single instance of a tithe owner or payer of tithe exceeding £1 redeeming under the terms offered in the Bill. We know that the clergy especially are very hard hit. They have a very small income, and I believe they might honestly say they could not afford any further reduction in that income. This means, according to the Government proposals, that the tithepayer would have to offer them such a sum for their tithe as at 3½ per cent. would equal their present income. This would amount to 28½ years' purchase, and the tithepayers are offered this at 4¼ per cent. If you work this out it amounts to this—that the tithepayer for 50 years will be called upon to pay 23 per cent. in excess of the sum now paid to the tithe owner. It is quite clear that no tithepayer in his senses would ask the tithe owner to agree to redemption on these terms. I cannot help thinking that under these Redemption Clauses the Government have an opportunity of making a considerable concession to tithepayers, and I trust from what the President of the Board of Trade has said that they will take advantage of the opportunity. If they do so, they will have the gratitude of the whole tithepaying community and of the whole agricultural interest, and, what I believe they will value more, the support of an united party, in which my vote will be included.

*(9.12.) MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): As a Welsh Member, I am deeply interested in this matter, and what I have to say will be from a Welsh point of view. There is a total distinction between the Welsh and the English view. With English Members in the main this has been a question of property, and this has been exemplified in the interesting speech to which we have just listened; but in Wales we regard the question from a wholly different standpoint, and it is well the House should understand that the vast majority of the Welsh people regard this as matter of conscience and religious principle. I quite admit that, mingled with this, there are other motives; agricultural depression and other elements have played a part, but undoubtedly the principal element is the religious principle, and those who fail to acknowledge this will fail to understand the strong feeling of the

Welsh people. There is no doubt that the main object of the Bill is to rivet the tithe permanently upon the people in the interest of the Church of England. The greater part of the Bill is to render tithe safer than before, to make it more secure, and, so far as may be, to perpetuate it as the property of the Church of England as by law established. This is why the Bill is so unpopular in Wales, and why Welsh Liberal Members find it impossible to acquiesce in it. It is altogether too late for any legislative changes to reconcile the Welsh people to that Church. English Members may not be aware of the scandals attached to tithe appropriation in Wales in the past, and if I refer for a few moments to past history it is to explain the deeply-rooted aversion of the Welsh people to the present system by law established. A large proportion of the Welsh tithe was literally stolen from the country by Henry VIII. and his descendants, and given to Court favourites, sold again by them, and as lay property has been handed down to the present day to owners who have no residential or any other connection with the Principality. These facts have been burned into the memories of the Welsh people. Another large portion of the tithe was alienated by the Bishops, sold or set apart for the endowment of their families, and so it has come to pass that a great portion of the tithe has ceased to perform any ecclesiastical function or to be of any use whatever to the Principality. I am sure the Postmaster General will bear me out in this. To show the truth of my observation, I would remind the House that in 1836, when the Tithe Commutation Act was passed, the amount of Welsh tithe was £280,000, and of this amount £67,000 a year belonged to clerical impropriators non-resident in Wales; £61,000 to lay impropriators scattered over the country; £8,000 to schools and colleges; and only £137,000 belonged to the parochial clergy. But let it be remembered that a large number of the parochial clergy were absentees, their posts were sinecures, and the duties were discharged by miserably paid curates. So, of the whole of the tithe collected in Wales at the time of the Tithe Commutation Act, only a third went to the working clergy of Wales. Can the House conceive a greater abuse? There is only one comparison I can make, and that is the way in which the revenues of the Irish Church were formerly distributed. The Welsh and the Irish Churches were conspicuous examples of ecclesiastical corruption, and each succeeded in alienating the feelings of the people. One illustration of the extent of the abuse of ecclesiastical management is furnished in the fact that in 1830 it was computed that in the See of St. Asaph, a poor diocese, no less than £27,000 a year was absorbed by the Bishop and his immediate relations, sons mostly, who had been preferred to all the rich livings in the diocese, and the entire working clergy of the diocese only received £18,000 a year. There was a state of things in which the parochial clergy were aliens in blood and language from the great bulk of the people; the ceremonies of the Church—such as baptism, confirmation and marriage—being performed in English and translated into Welsh by an interpreter at the Bishop's or clergyman's elbow. Need we wonder that the great bulk of the people became Nonconformists and that the Church of England stank in the nostrils of the people. Wales became absolutely alienated from the Church of England, and it is wholly impossible now to alter this condition of feeling. I do not say these abuses exist now. A great many Acts of Parliament have been passed to improve this state of things, and the most flagrant abuses have been removed; but even in the present year of the total tithe collected in Wales—£300,000—still, 37 per cent. is appropriated to lay purposes and only 63 per cent. to the local clergy. Contrast the action of the Ecclesiastical Authorities in Wales with that of the Nonconformists who, out of small earnings, have built 3,000 chapels, and maintain their religion at a cost of £300,000 or £400,000 a year, and it will be seen that the religious life of the people has flowed through channels outside the Church of England. No doubt there has been a considerable revival of the Church in late years, and the Establishment is in a much healthier condition than it has been in for the last century; yet, still, it cannot be denied that Nonconformity has made the Welsh people the most religious in Europe. This I assert without fear of contradiction. How can a people with such a history acquiesce in the payment of tithe to the Church of England? It is wholly impossible. It never can be held that the tithe has any sacredness in the minds of the Welsh people. The Welsh people do not regard tithe as enjoined by the teachings of the Christian religion; their interpretation of the New Testament leads them to believe the tithe is no part of the Christian dispensation. To them it is a Jewish institution, and derives its existence in our time from the darkest ages in the history of the Church. They do not regard it as in any sense a divine institution, and it is impossible that it should have in their minds that sacred or semi-sacred character it has in the minds of many English members. We must bear these facts in mind in forming our judgment. It is impossible that we can legislate for Wales in this matter as we can for England, where apparently the majority of the people acquiesce in the payment of tithe and its application to the Church of England. The Welsh nation never can be satisfied until tithe is made national property. We must treat Wales as a nationality, and that is the foundation of the whole question. Wales has a separate nationality in history, language, blood, and ideas; and if you wish to have a peaceable and settled Wales, a source of strength to the whole Kingdom, you must satisfy this deep national longing. You do not understand how deep the feeling is; the great mass of the people are possessed by it; and, until you recognise this and grant religious equality, you will have ever recurring troubles in Wales. Pass what Bill you like now, you will come no nearer to a settlement of the question. Agitation will follow agitation, and trouble succeed trouble, and the demand for Home Rule will increase. Now, I put it to this Unionist Government, who wish to discourage Home Rule agitation, if they wish to weaken the desire for Home Rule in Wales, let them grant Disestablishment and the nationalisation of the tithe. Do this, and you will take the heart out of the Home Rule movement; refuse this, and you stimulate a movement against what you conceive to be the best interests of the kingdom. I believe the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Raikes) knows the truth of this. He lives in Flintshire, and knows the feeling there. He knows that if you refuse this the agitation will increase and Members will be returned for Wales of more and more advanced opinions. I hold comparatively moderate views. I do not wish to see a needless multiplication of Legislatures; but to bind our peoples together there is only one way, and that is to recognise the national desire and deal with each part of the country in a manner suited to its national traditions and deeply-seated convictions. Then in Wales you will have the most contented and peaceable part of the United Kingdom. If you refuse this you prepare for yourselves and for the Legislature of the future greater difficulties to deal with. We do not wish to see things carried to extremes; we do not wish to see a very radical solution; we would rather see things solved in a moderate and reasonable way, and therefore we ask and hope for some expression of sympathy for the reasonable representations of the Welsh people.

*(9.30.) SIR JOHN DORINGTON (Gloucester, Tewkesbury): It is very much to be regretted that the hon. Member, like others, should have entered the region of Disestablishment and other questions altogether foreign to the objects of the Bill. There have been statements made on the Church Question and arguments based on these statements which should not be allowed to pass unanswered. The hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Hussey Vivian) alluded to the origin of tithe, and quoted Lord Selborne as apparently in favour of the idea of a tripartite division of tithe. The hon. Member for Bristol seemed also to say there was this tripartite division, and that there was a special allocation for the poor. But I know something of the matter, having made a special investigation of it some years ago, and I will ask the House, not to take my opinion, but to hear what Lord Selborne has said on the subject. He quotes a tract published by the Liberation Society, called *The Case for Disestablishment.* The author of the tract says of the tripartite division:—

> "(1) In all early laws about tithes it is clearly laid down that the poor were to have a share. (2) That at first the division into four parts, and after a while into three parts, prevailed here. (3) That later on when tithes were not so freely given away, and a law was passed to compel them, the same plan was insisted on, and the poor still had their share. (4) That this was before the time of Parlia-

ments, but when Parliaments made laws upon the subject their rights were preserved. (5) That nobody seems to know how or when the poor lost their legal claim to a share of the tithes."

"Of these statements," Lord Selborne says, "there is but one to which that degree of respect is due, which may be accorded to all opinions which have been the subject of honest controversy among learned men, namely, that which relates to the division of tithes, in a remote age, into parts, of which one was for the poor; but it is necessary for those who maintain that opinion to show by historical evidence that at some time or other in England any such practice did in fact prevail, and this has never been, and never can be, done. It is absolutely unfounded."

The idea arises simply from the practice of foreign Churches, which was never introduced into England. In some dioceses of French, Spanish, and some other Churches the division was into three only of those parts, the Bishop taking no share. The hon. Baronet the Member for Swansea (Sir H. Vivian) has spoken of the mysterious origin of tithes; but there is no mystery about it if the historic documents are investigated. The original gifts of tithes exist by hundreds in our public libraries, especially gifts by the owners of manors and parishes in this country. Thus you have the origin of tithes, and this explanation is probably quite sufficient for the purposes of this discussion. I think the Government deserve great credit for the way in which they have brought in the Bill, and the provisions which they have included for the collection and possible redemption of tithe. It is assumed that whilst the tenants have been in the habit of paying the tithes, it was not the intention of the Act of 1836 that they should pay them. But if that were not the intention it was the necessary consequence of the provisions in that Act for the recovery of tithe. The remedy is against the tenant and not against the landlord, so that it is much more to the interest of the tenant to pay than to leave the payment to the landlord. Where the tenants are willing to trust the landlords it is more convenient that the landlord should pay, and my own practice has been to take all the tithes into my own hands. But there is a drawback. What is the effect of the landlord taking this course? During bad years the tenants, paying a fixed rent, while the tithe is regularly descending, give a constantly increasing rental to the landlord, because he pays a less tithe; but when the years are prosperous the tithes go up, and the landlord loses by that, and has no advantage from the increased prosperity of the land. So that in order to make things fair we should have to return to the exploded practice of corn rents. I think it desirable to make the change proposed by the Bill, namely, that the landlord should pay the tithe. Reference has been made to the provision of the 2nd clause with regard to the special rate. I look on that as the happiest provision of the Bill. It provides a means of discerning whether the tithe and the value of the land are in accordance with one another; and the valuation is placed in the hands of those who are sure, in their own interests, to see that the value is as high as it ought to be. The right hon. Baronet the President of the Board of Trade alluded to grievances which undoubtedly prevail, and which, I think, demand a larger recognition from the Government than they seem inclined at the present moment to afford. With reference to what fell from the hon. Member for Bristol with regard to the landlords putting the money into their own pockets, I repudiate that insinuation altogether; but I would ask for a remedy, because it is an injury to the Church that these cases of hardship should occur. They are numerous in some counties, but rare in others, and form no large proportion of the total amount of tithe raised in England; but so long as they exist they are a scandal, and some way of dealing with them is needed. This opinion has not been formed without due consideration of the subject, nor without other opinions backing up my own. The question was discussed by a Diocesan Conference in my county two years ago, and a Special Committee was constituted, containing nearly all the dignitaries of the diocese—archdeacons, canons, and parochial clergy, as well as squires and landlords. The Committee came to the conclusion that, as a whole, the tithe system had worked well since 1836, and did not require any alteration except in regard to the hard cases, and that, with regard to the hard cases where the tithe is out of all proportion to the rental value of the land, some remedy was demanded, which should be applied subject to revision—that is, that you should not apply a final settlement to any reduction you might make. The right hon. Baronet the President of the Board of Trade has said it is impossible to have any re-valuation, and I quite agree in that; but where the tithe exceeds one-half of the whole valuation of the land, or amounts even to the full value, that is certainly not what was intended when the Act of 1836 was passed. That was intended to be a final Act, on the supposition that the conditions of life then prevailing would continue, and that the produce of the soil of England would remain the same as it was then. One object was to stop any further increase of the tithe consequent upon agricultural improvements, so that the door should be closed against a rise, and equally closed against a fall. But owing to the fall which has taken place in the prices of produce, it has become impossible to realise the rates in respect of which the land was valued. Tillage has largely disappeared, and the land has gone back from a considerable rental to the poor and inferior prices of pasturage, in many cases amounting only to 3s., 4s., and 5s. per acre. In such cases the tithe becomes an absurdity; certainly it is an offence against public sentiment. It is a transfer of the estate from the landowner to the tithe owner. Well, under the provisions of the 2nd sub-section of the 1st clause, I think it quite practicable to apply a remedy under equitable conditions to all concerned. Perhaps I may point out that, as I read the 2nd sub-section, there can be no question, whatever a Superior Court might say, the Inferior Court having before it such a case might remit not only the excess beyond the whole value of the land, but the whole tithe itself. This was not probably the intention of the draftsman, nor is it desirable to go as far as that. I would propose that instead, as the 2nd sub-section provides, of persons whose tithe was in excess of the whole special rateable value being alone allowed to go into Court for redress, a much lower figure should be taken—say, even one-half of the special rateable value—and redress should be granted for one year. Thus, in the present circumstances, a just and fair arrangement would be arrived at which would not prejudice a revision in the years when farming would again become a profitable industry in England.

*(9.45.) MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I will preface the remarks I have to make on this Bill by saying that, not being a labourer or farmer, I do not pretend to understand the details of this measure, but being desirous of ascertaining what the farmers or the labourers have to say upon this subject, I have endeavoured to read what has appeared in relation to it in the Press, and that portion of the Press which is not at all times favourable to this side of the House. I also attended a few days ago a meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel, a meeting of farmers from different counties in England. I will quote what I then heard in reference to this measure—

> "A Bill conceived entirely in the interest of the tithe owner, which will not redress any of the grievances of the tithe payers are suffering under a Coercion Bill to screw tithe out of unwilling payers, a sop to the Establishment at the expense of the land, and in Wales of something more than the land; a Bill which, failing to provide a proper means of revision and re-adjustment, added insult to injury, and perpetuated a state of things which it was impossible to bear."

That is the judgment of the farmers of the Eastern Counties of England on this Bill; my own opinion is that it is a Bill to give perpetual security to the increased incomes derived by the clergy under the Tithes Commutation Act. That meeting was composed of men who have been strict adherents to the policy of the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. One of them said

> "They had not burnt parsons' homesteads, nor boycotted the Conservatives, but had followed them like sheep, and this was their reward."

An hon. Gentleman opposite has said there is to be no distraint, and no imprisonment. I do not know how he arrives at that conclusion; but, according to my reading of the Bill, it provides both for distraint and imprisonment. [*Cries of* "No."] An hon. Member says "No." True, under this Bill a man cannot be sent to prison, and his land cannot be sold, but he will incur the same consequences by non-payment of the tithes and costs. With a Receiver in possession the landlord cannot distrain for rent, and the farmer will be in this happy position, he will be able to punish the landlord and parson while asserting his own independence at the same time. But what else can be done? If it is proved that a man is able to pay, and refuses to do so, and a process is issued against him for contempt of the judgment of the Court, he may be sent to prison at once. If that is not imprisonment I do not know what else it is. When this sort of thing comes about we shall have friction between landlord and tenant, instead of friction which at present exists between the tenant and the parson. This is what appears to me to be the real outcome of Lord Salisbury's Bill. If I am not greatly mistaken you will find, especially in Wales, that the result will be to alienate from the Church not only the tenant, but probably the landlord as well. I see it stated in a paper called *Land and Water* (and I am of the same opinion) that—

> "When the people recognise that the land of the country is to be farmed by County Court officials for the benefit of the clergy, and that the landlord is to be turned out of his inheritance for the sake of the parson a very formidable state of things will arise."

Another statement was made at that meeting by one of the farmers opposed to the Bill, namely, as to the necessity of providing for re-assessment of the basis of the tithe rent-charge. It was said that at the time of the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 the average price of wheat was 7s. per bushel; an acre, of land producing 28 bushels. This would amount to £9 16s. per acre, which, after deducting £6 as the cost of production, left the farmer a net profit of £3 16s. 0d. as the average for the seven years preceding the Act of 1836. That was the basis on which the tithe rent-charge was then fixed, but through the abolition of protective duties the extension of railways in foreign countries, and the multiplication of the means of quick and cheap transit of corn from other parts of the world, the market prices in this country were greatly reduced. Now, supposing the home farmers were able, by the use of artificial manures and a system of high farming, to maintain a yield of 28 bushels per acre, how would the balance stand. Taking the average prices of the last six years he would only receive 4s. per bushel, instead of 7s. as formerly; that would allow him £5 12. 0d. per acre, so with the cost of production being £6, there would be a loss per acre of 8s. Where, I ask, is the justice of compelling the farmer to pay the same amount on an article on which he is losing 8s. per acre as compared with his former profit of £3 16s. 0d.? The injustice of the case is at once demonstrated. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite may say that this is the case of the farmer and labourer only, but, with due submission, I beg to think otherwise. Why, the farmer has been compelled in a large measure to give up the profitless task of wheat-growing; indeed, we are told that no less than three million acres of land which formerly produced wheat are now turned into pasture. What does this mean? It means keeping the ploughman, the labourer, and the harvest-men deprived of their healthy employment on the farms, and sending them to the large towns to swell the already large number of the unemployed. It means the driving of these men by hundreds into our mines, where they will be surrounded by dangers of which they have had no previous experience, and whereby they will be not only in jeopardy of their own lives, but the means of jeopardising the lives of other people. To pass this Bill without some provision for revision and re-adjustment on the basis upon which the tithe rent-charge is made would be, as was stated at the Westminster meeting, adding injury to insult, which has already been heaped upon the agriculturists of this country as a remedy. It is proposed to remove the direct payment of the tithes from the tenant to the landlord, but is that any real remedy for the grievance? I am afraid not, for the transfer will benefit no one but the parson and the tithe owner, whose interests are entirely opposed to those of the other parties. It is idle, therefore, to attempt to create the belief that this question will be satisfactorily settled by merely shifting the immediate payment of the tithe from the tenant to the landlord. The tithe is an impost which impedes the cultivation of the land, and affects all the interests connected with the land—landlord, farmer, and labourer. It discourages the landlord from investing capital for any purpose connected with the land. Hence, the mere shifting of the burden of tithe will not afford the remedy which is demanded, for tithe has grown to an amount which is quite out of proportion to the amount that the land can bear. It is admitted that this debate is a Welsh debate, and the hon. member for East Bradford went so far as to say that it is the agitation in Wales which has created the necessity for this Bill. I know that the President of the Board of Trade smiled his acquiescence at the assertion that it was a Welsh debate. But I cannot see, Sir, why it was necessary for him to sing to us again the plaintive cadence of the poor starving clergy of Wales. Sir, if there is any disgrace at all in this matter it is that the richest Church in the world should allow its ministers to come before the world as applicants for the charity of mankind. I think all these allusions to the sufferings of the Welsh clergy is the greatest possible disgrace to the Church and the Churchmen themselves —especially in Wales. For there you have on the one side almost all the rich and landed people who have, in addition, about £300,000 a year of religious endowments. Yet with the sufferings of the clergy of this favoured Church all the world is ringing. On the other hand, you have in that little country the great mass of the poor and the labouring classes. You have the miners and the farmers the puddlers and the shepherds, and the small shopkeepers in the villages, and all of them that are freeholders have actually to pay out of their small revenues tithes for the maintenance of a rival Church. These people have to build their own chapels, and maintain their own ministers. And you never hear of their minister being starved. The hon. Member for Oswestry said that this is not the spontaneous action of the Welsh, but is a case got up by the minority and a few agitators. If that is true, what a wonderful illustration of what minorities and agitators can effect. But I deny the contention, Sir. Previous to the tithe agitation, the Welsh people sent to this House 34 Members, 28 of whom were pledged to the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the English Church. The tithe agitation is pressing forward with incredible rapidity, and that the course taken by the clergy has given it a greater impetus nobody will deny. The Welsh poet says—

> "Ergyd morthwyl yr arwerthwr,
> Werthodd geffyl ffarmio John,
> Drawodd gnul hen gloch angladdol,
> Eglwys trais y deyrnas hon.
>
> Gwerthi yd a gwair y bobl,
> Ceidwaid hedd yn rhoddi sen,
> Gwel'd y ffeirad yn yr *hobl*,
> Dyna ddaw a hi i ben."

Yes, we have had very valuable assistance given by the minority and by the agitators. I do not pretend to know the origin of tithes, but this the Welsh people know, that it is used for purposes with which they have no sympathy. When in the reign of Henry IV. an Act was passsed providing that the Vicar should not be removable at the caprice of the proprietor, but was to be canonically instituted and inducted, he was to be sufficiently endowed for three purposes, "to do divine service, to inform the people, and to keep hospitality." That means divine service for the nation, not a few of the nation; and it means giving information to the nation in full and not in part; and it means hospitality, to whom if not for the poor? I contend that the tripartite arrangement is found in this Statute, although it is denied. For a very long time the vicar, Bishops, and parsons have disregarded the keeping of hospitality, as they consider it sufficiently maintained by keeping themselves, and giving such charity, if any, as they think fit to dispense among the poor of their own congregations. Tithes are the property of the nation, and are devoted to the National Church, maintained by law professedly for the advantage of the nation at large. The tithe, in our opinion, thus became national property. And when the nation was of one faith, their arrangement with respect to tithes was an intelligent one, and might have had the sanction of the national will, yet since that time a change has come over the spirit of the people. For years past the Church has not only failed but has neglected to do its duty in Wales. An article in a Bangor paper says the English services in the Welsh Cathedral bears the inobliterated stamp of the iron arm. It gives interesting details regarding the services in the Bangor Cathedral. In the diocese of Bangor the Bishop receives an income of £4,200 per annum, and having sat upon his throne for 31 years he has drawn the enormous sum of £130,200. The second dignitary is the Dean; he holds a comfortable office for which he receives a handsome remuneration of £700 per annum, whilst the two Archdeacons, who are also well paid, conduct their services and deliver their charges in a language which is foreign to that spoken by the people. The Precentor, a person from Yorkshire, is also in receipt of good emolument; while the four Canons, who come to the city which affords them a pleasant change for three months every year, each receive £350 per annum for the amount of work they are called upon to do. To those may be added the ordinary and the minor Canons who are in receipt of £170 a year each, the total cost of upholding English services within Welsh Cathedrals reaches the enormous amount of £4,000 exclusive of the Diocesan. The condition of the cathedral churches in Wales is unique. The population of four Welsh cities is as follows:—Bangor, 10,000; St. Asaph's, 2,000; Llandaff, 800; and St. David's, including the island of Ramsey and several hamlets, a little over 2,000. This gives the total population of 14,800, or, say in round figures, 15,000; but it is to be remembered that not 1 per cent. of these people can avail themselves of the daily services conducted in these cathedrals. This being so, I would ask right hon. Gentlemen opposite of what good can these daily services in the cathedral of Bangor be to the Welshmen of Bethesda and the Welsh speaking population of the surrounding neighbourhood? Nevertheless the people have to pay this enormous sum of money for keeping up the services for the rich, while the poor are practically forgotten. I ask the House to contrast the position of Llandaff with its 800 people and Cardiff with its population of 80,000. Of what good are the services of Llandaff to the toiling people around? What good are they to the miners of Rhondda, or to the toilers among the hills and vales of Glamorganshire? So far as the adaptation of the Church system to the necessities of the people is concerned all this money is entirely wasted. Not only has the Church failed in its ministrations, but it has neglected to do its duty to the people. There was a time when Wales stood in need of religious services and education. There was a time when one of our poets said that Wales was in "heathen darkness," and at that time the Church of England had a good opportunity of supplying the religious want that was then experienced. But it failed to do this. What does the Rev. W. Williams, of Pantycelyn, say?—

> "Pan oedd Cymru gynt yn gorwedd
>   Mewn annuwiol farwol hun,
> Heb na Phresperter na ffeirad
>   Nac un Esgob ar ddihun;
> Yn y gorwel tywyll du-dew,
>   Pryd nad oedd y ffydd ond gwan,
> Pryd yr ofnent fyn'd i'r meusydd,
>   Ac i'r lleoedd nad oedd Llan.
>
> Howel Harries o Drefecca
>   Fel yr Udgorn seiniai ma's,
> Weithiau o Sinai, weithiau o Seion,
>   Addewidion nefol ras."

This describes the time when Wales needed religious instruction, and the Church neglected the opportunity of imparting it. The Welsh nation in those days was similarly situated to the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, and the Levite coming along, looked at him and passed by on the other side, and left him there to die. The priest, like the Levite priest of old, came, and saw, and passed along on the other side, and had it not been for Nonconformity in the character of the Good Samaritan journeying that way, and, taking compassion upon the people, bound up their wounds, poured oil and wine upon them, set them on their beasts of burden and took care of them, the Welsh would have remained in the same position still. There the Welsh people would have been left until to-day for anything the English Church would have done for them had not the Church been moved by the fear of losing its emoluments. There is one point more to which I would refer. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade admitted last night that the tithes, like all other Church property, were paid for services rendered to the nation at large. I would remind the hon. Gentleman that the Dean of Manchester, in a paper he read some time ago, said—

> "We must be fundamental, we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, we accept history in England as fairly interpreting its claims. What can be accepted from the civil power, and undertaken by the civil power without damage to the Sovereign, we are still ready to accept and to undertake for the sake of the nation and not otherwise. We must make it clear to the nation that the duty of bringing the people of this kingdom to the kingdom of God and of Christ we have at heart, and neither position nor possession."

The clergy of the English Church say that they do not receive the tithes for doing other work than that of promoting the Kingdom of God. But in Wales the Church represents less than one-sixth of the people, while there are many parishes in the Principality that receive no service at all from the Church clergy. This is the case in Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire. In a parish in Cardiganshire Mr. Griffiths Jones Penlan has been farming land for upwards of 20 years, on which he has paid £10 per annum for tithes, making a total of £200. During the whole of that period he has only been inside the church on one solitary occasion, namely, that of the funeral of his brother, which service is all he has ever received for his payment of £200. [A VOICE: More shame for him.] An hon. Member says "shame" because that person does not go to church, but what use would it be for him to go there, inasmuch as the service of the church is in a foreign tongue, which he, as a Welshman, is unable to understand. In this matter we are dealing with the Welsh-speaking people, and we are forcing upon them services in a foreign language, which they are incapable of understanding, and because they do not like to go to church to hear a service in a foreign tongue you cry "shame." This man is a deacon of a Calvinistic Methodist Chapel and pays every week his fair share towards the support of that chapel. He does not want your services, but still, though you have nothing to give him, you compel him to pay £200. In another case, in Carmarthenshire, the tithe payable in the parish is £78 per annum. There is a tiny church there, about the size of two wheelbarrows, and through the portal of that church there goes not a man, woman, or child from the beginning of January to the end of December, and yet you compel the people of that parish to pay £78 a year in tithes. In another place, in Pembrokeshire, we find a small parish and a large farm, and of them you can say that the two are one. Mr. Gibbs, the occupier of that farm, pays somewhere about £50 a year in tithes, and there is not a church in the parish. How, under these circumstances, can you expect the Welsh people to continue loyal? Can you wonder for a moment that the Welsh people are opposing your Bill? It perpetuates a payment to the clergy for which they do nothing. Do you think this Bill is going to bring peace to Wales? I am afraid it will not. The Welsh people have been loyal to a degree. They are a peaceful nation, but I am afraid that if you force this measure upon them instead of bringing peace and goodwill to us you will bring something very different. You will create dissension. If you want us to be peaceful give us justice. It is impossible that lasting peace can exist unless it is based on justice; then, let me appeal to you to give us justice. Allow us to keep our money or give us something in return; we are poor and need the money for national purposes, and we protest against being asked to pay you these tithes without receiving value for them.

*(10.37.) MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): I must say, Mr. Speaker, that from the tone of the hon. Member's remarks I should not have been surprised at his incurring your rebuke for a complaint that this debate has been exclusively carried on in the English language. If it is wrong to have religious services in English it is, surely, equally wrong to have debates in this House in that language. But the hon. Member, despite what he says in regard to the Welsh language, is willing to come here and take part in our deliberations in the language which is common to all Her Majesty's subjects. The lecturing the hon. Gentleman has given is only one illustration, as I venture to think, of the extraordinary manner in which this debate has wandered. It does not seem to me that this debate has really approached the kernel of the question, nor, from what I have heard from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, does it seem to me that they take a very serious view of the situa-

tion. It is a very curious thing that when one of the most important measures of the Session, which has been introduced by Her Majesty's Government, is under debate the leader of the Opposition is not present in his place. If I were to draw any conclusion from the appearance of the House, and especially of the Bench opposite, it would be that the leaders of the Opposition have some difficulty in making up their minds. After all, this is a Bill which in its substance the right hon. Member for Derby said last year he would cordially support. The right hon. Gentleman no doubt will follow, and will tell the House what line he is going to take on this occasion. I shall not be surprised if the right hon. Gentleman says that, although he cannot approve the Bill in every particular, he will not advise his hon. Friends to oppose the Second Reading. Whether he says that or not, that seems to be the tone, indicated by their general demeanour, which the leaders of the Opposition have adopted. That is a reasonable view to take. I am bound to say, however, that on my own side of the House little animation has been displayed on the subject. [*Ironical cheers*]. Well, perhaps we cannot be animated on all subjects. We look on this from a business point of view. No doubt the hon. Member who has just spoken stirred his friends up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, I might almost say romance. We have had the subject treated from every point of view—from that of the Welsh bard to that of the politician. But I look at this as a matter of justice. The tithe is the first charge on the land, but it has been, in many cases, more difficult to collect it than the rent. Those who support the Bill do not ask for any exceptional privileges for the tithe owners. All we ask is that until a change is made in the fundamental institutions of the country and the Church is disestablished and disendowed the rights of the tithe owners shall be secured. Surely that is not an unreasonable ground to take. It is the ground on which for some years past I have endeavoured to advocate a settlement of this question. This is the fourth year in which Her Majesty's present Government have brought in a Tithe Bill. Introduced under happier auspices than any other measure of the same kind, this Bill bids fair to settle the question, and I should have thought, therefore, that the House of Commons would approach it in a business-like spirit, with the intention of seeing justice done between man and man—which intention and desire has always been the distinguishing characteristic of the British House of Commons. But this debate has degenerated into a Disestablishment debate. Why is that so? Simply, I suppose, because hon. Gentlemen cannot find an opportunity for bringing forward the question of Disestablishment legitimately, and seize upon this Bill as an excuse. And they are utterly irresponsible on this occasion, for they know that an adverse Vote will not injure their cause. When we come to look at the details of this Bill, surely they are such as will commend themselves to the common sense of this House. There is one concession made by the tithe owner which ought not to be lost sight of. At present if land is out of cultivation, two years of tithe arrears can be claimed when it again comes into cultivation. But if this Bill becomes law that claim will fall to the ground. Hon. Members who represent county constituencies will find it rather difficult to persuade their constituents that this Bill is not conceived in their interests, for no one can controvert the statement that it will remove a pressure from the tenant which has long weighed upon him in connection with the tithe rent-charge. It will remove a great deal of friction, and that must be a boon which the tenant farmers of this country will appreciate. Again, it should be remembered that the tithe rent-charge owner is the only person who pays rates upon his income. Living, as the clergy do, upon very narrow incomes, sometimes, I fear, on the very verge of privation, they find themselves called upon to pay rates upon their tithe rent-charge. This surely should be borne in mind when we are considering the re-adjustment of this question. One word as to the redemption clauses. I am glad that the Government have taken up that subject, though in what form they will carry it out may not yet be certain. If the President of the Board of Trade, however, can induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer to grant money on easier terms so as to facilitate redemption he will be doing a great good; and I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will, in any case, take care of the interests of the tithe rent-charge owners, from whom great concessions are demanded. I sincerely congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the care and attention which he has given to the subject, and I can promise from this side of the House, if not an absolutely unqualified, at any rate a very general support. The impression left by the debate is that the House has come to the conclusion that the subject ought to be taken out of the category of unsettled questions.

(10.50.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): The hon. Member who has just sat down has found fault with us for not being sufficiently impressed with the magnitude and importance of this Bill, and he complained that I was absent when the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill made his statement. I am very proud that the hon. Gentleman thought it worth while to notice my absence; but there was also absent, apparently, a far more important person when this great measure affecting the tithe was opened to the House, and that was the representative of the University of Oxford (Mr. J. G. Talbot). Therefore, if he will permit me to return the compliment, I will express my extreme surprise that the hon. Gentleman should have chosen that particular moment to absent himself. He has talked of the unanimous tone which has characterised the whole of the debate on the opposite side of the House. The hon. Member must have singular conceptions of what constitutes unanimity. I have listened to every speech made to-night; but if the hon. Gentleman is of opinion that the speeches made by the Members for Maldon (Mr. Gray), West Dorset (Mr. Farquharson), and the Tewkesbury Division of Gloucester (Sir J. Dorington), were speeches unanimously in favour of the proposals of the Government, I entirely differ from him. There was not one single provision of the Bill which the hon. Member for Maldon did not condemn in a very strong manner.

*MR. GRAY: I am very sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman,

Mr. Talbot

but I must say I certainly did not express any condemnation of that particular clause which transfers the onus of paying the tithe on to the landlord.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Well, there is one clause which the hon. Member did not altogether condemn. I will do justice to that clause presently. I have to apologise for not having been present yesterday. The fact is I was usefully employed elsewhere. My absence from the opening of the debate was due to no desire to shirk this discussion, or to escape from whatever responsibility might belong to me in respect of this measure. The hon Member for Oswestry (Mr. Stanley Leighton) has said quite truly that I have expressed approbation of any Bill which proposed to do the following things: First, to put the payment of the tithe upon the landlord; secondly, to bring about an abolition of distress; and thirdly, to obtain a reduction of the tithe if the land required it. I entirely agree, and if this Bill contained those provisions, or anything like them, I should be perfectly prepared, however much I might differ on the details, to support it. But, in my opinion, it contains none of them. This Bill does not put the payment upon the landowner and discharge the tenant. Of course you are not speaking of the case where the landowner now pays the tithe, but of the case where the occupier bears the burden. I venture to affirm that where the tenant now pays the tithe under contract with the landlord, this Bill does not discharge him from that payment. He will have to pay it exactly the same, though you may call it by another name. And with regard to the owner who is likewise the occupier there is naturally no pretence that he receives any discharge. Now, I want this to be examined most carefully, because I want the occupiers of this country to see to what extent they get any relief at all under this Bill. You say the Bill abolishes distress. I absolutely deny that it abolishes distress on any occupier whatever against whom it now operates. Not only this, but it introduces distress under circumstances which will make it a much greater burden. It leaves distress in every case where it now exists and makes it far more burdensome and costly than at present. I ask any hon. Gentleman to look at Clause 6, Sub-section 2, of the Bill. On the whole, in England I should say, it is the more ordinary case for the tenant to contract to pay the tithe, and that is the case dealt with under this sub-section. In that case the tenant of the land—

> "Shall owe in addition to and as part of his rent, such sum in each year as the owner has paid in respect of the tithe rent-charge."

He is not relieved of the tithe rent-charge in any way. The landlord has paid the tithe, and he comes down on the tenant and levies upon him in place of the parson. The tithe under the name of rent will be exactly the same thing as the man paid before this Bill was introduced. How then is that man relieved? Take a case in which a tenant pays £100 rent for his farm and the tithe rent-charge is £50. At present the tenant pays £100 rent to his landlord and £50 to the parson. Under this Bill the landlord will pay the £50 to the parson, and he will come down upon the tenant and demand that £50. Calling it rent does not make it different; it is tithe just as it was before. What is the relief then? The only difference is that the landlord levies instead of the parson, and as the agent of the parson. Now, I have said that distress is not done away with. Supposing that tenant says to his landlord, "No, I will pay you the £100, but I will not pay the £50 of tithe which you have paid on my behalf," just as he might have said to the parson, "I will not pay the £50." The only remedy the parson would have would be distress upon the land. But what is the situation of the tenant-farmer now? He is liable, not only for that which can only be levied by distress out of the land, but as you have by this Bill constituted it rent due to the landlord, the remedies against the tenant are the same remedies as those which the landlord has for rent. But that is not all. It becomes a debt which can be sued for; it becomes a personal obligation which affects the whole property and person of the occupier; you can have executions not only against the land, but against the whole property of the tenant; ay, and in the last resource you can have ejectment for non-payment of this sum of money, which really is tithe. I say that so far from relieving the occupying farmer you place upon him a threefold burden; you create against him two remedies for levying this sum of money to which he was not liable before. He is liable to tithe as a debt for which, after judgment, he may be sent to prison, and you have made him liable to ejectment. A nice position this, in which to place the Nonconformists of Wales. You create against the tenant remedies of a most oppressive character to which he is not now subjected. That is the case of the tenant under contract to pay tithe at present; it will be screwed out of him as before. Now, let me ask the attention of the House to a matter of the gravest importance, and one which ought to be thoroughly understood in the country. Look at the condition of the small holder who is owner and occupier of his own land. In my mind, that is a class of the community that requires the greatest protection at the hands of this House. He is dealt with in Clause 3, Sub-section 2, which says—

> "Where the owner of the lands is also the occupier, he shall, on the appointment of the Receiver become tenant to the Receiver in like manner as if he had attorned tenant to him as owner, and the sum ordered to be paid were the rent payable to the Receiver as such owner."

I ask the House to listen to this and to consider the case of a man of this class, so numerous in Wales, who refuses to pay tithe. In what position does this Bill place him? He is made tenant to the Receiver. Who is the Receiver? He is the agent of the parson, he is the tithe collector—what used to be called in Ireland the tithe proctor—and you positively take this freeholder and, in order to collect the tithe, make him tenant to the tithe collector. Is this going to bring peace to Wales? A more monstrous outrage I never heard of. [*Ministerial laughter.*] Yes, you may laugh at these small freeholders, but you will soon laugh at the wrong side of your mouth, I think. If you make the small freeholders in England and Wales tenants to the tithe collector, you will find that your tithe, and the objects for which it is collected, will disappear very rapidly. Under this clause the tithe collector will have all the rights of the landlord, and amongst them, of course, the power of distress. What becomes, then, of the pretence that you do away with distress? The very first remedy that will be applied under this clause is distress. The freeholder, being tenant to the Receiver, is subject also to an action and to judgment and consequences of judgment. This clause says—

> "Where the owner of the lands is also the occupier he shall, on the appointment of the Receiver, become tenant to the Receiver in like manner as if he had attorned tenant to him."

There is no attempt to define the conditions of this tenancy, and whether they are to contain a provision for re-entry is not stated, but whether there is to be a provision for re-entry or not, if the man is made tenant to the tithe-collector he can be turned out of his tenancy at any time. It comes to this, that you make the small freeholder the tenant of the parson in order that the latter may recover the tithe. To suppose that you are going to bring peace to Wales by legislation of this character, to my mind, passes beyond the limits of absurdity. In Clause 3 you deal with the non-occupying landowner, and whilst you have created a personal liability in the case of the occupier, you take very good care that the landowner shall have no personal liability whatever. Throughout this Bill your extreme regard for the interests of the landowner and your extreme disregard of the interests of the occupier are conspicuous. In the first section of Clause 3 a landowner not being an occupier is protected in this way:—

> "An order under this Act shall not be executed personally against the owner."

But there is no provision that an order shall not be executed personally against the occupier; in fact, it is to be executed personally against the occupier. Therefore, whilst you have provided that the owner shall not be personally liable,

> "Nor by sale of the lands, nor by any process of law other than that provided by this Act,"

you give no such protection to the occupier. Why then does the hon. Member for the Oswestry Division (Mr. Stanley Leighton) claim my vote for this Bill? It violates every principle which he asks me to support. He may, perhaps, say that some of the Amendments which were inserted by the Attorney General at the eleventh hour last Session were open to the same objection. That is perfectly true. I must confess that when those clauses were flashed upon us all of a sudden by the Attorney General, I did not realise that this was the case. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"] No, and I venture to say that at the time nobody realised it. It is rather remarkable that even in this debate no one has yet drawn attention to the consequence of making a man liable for rent in this manner, and to how entirely it changes the aspect of the question when you do that which is the keystone of this Bill, convert tithe rent-charge into a rent liability. If it be a reproach to me that I did not realise that these consequences would have followed from the proposals made last year, I accept the censure that may be passed upon me. I do not believe the Government realised what they were doing. I believe they thought they were giving relief to the tenant, whereas they were really imposing upon him a great burden. I also approved, as the hon. Member for Oswestry says, of the reduction of the tithe rent-charge. When the hon. and learned Attorney General produced his new clauses to the House last year, there was one which I fixed upon at the time as most valuable. That was the clause for the constitution of the County Court as a Land Court to revise the tithes, and now that clause has disappeared altogether. It is remarkable that the President of the Board of Trade denounced that clause and its principle in his speech yesterday. The Government are not fortunate with their Tithe Bills. They have introduced four, and they have all miscarried. Last Session they introduced a measure which was so knocked to pieces that they were obliged to change its whole scope, and now one of the very Amendments which they then proposed is condemned by the President of the Board of Trade. That Amendment said—

> "The Court, on being satisfied by evidence that it is just, shall make such order for the remission of part of the sum claimed as will prevent the total sum of the tithe rent-charge from exceeding the annual sum which, under all the circumstances of the case, may reasonably be taken to have been the net profit of the land."

That is something like a remission of tithe. Net profit was the principle of that measure. If there was no net profit the whole sum could be remitted and the amount so remitted could not be recovered. But all that has gone, and the Amendment proposed by the Attorney General, I suppose with the sanction of the Cabinet, carrying that principle into effect has altogether disappeared. And what have we in its place? We have this extraordinary affair called the special rateable value. I should have thought the farmers of England had been bothered enough with rateable value already without being introduced to a new rateable value. This is an entirely new departure from the proposal of the Attorney General last year, and I am not pledged to support anything entirely different from that. This is not the Bill I am pledged to support. In my belief this is nothing but a re-opening of the settlement of 1836. In my opinion, the claim of hon. Gentlemen opposite and on this side of the House for a fair and equitable revision of the position of the tithepayers is one that cannot and ought not to be resisted. I am glad that hon. Members behind me will take the opinion of the House about going into Committee upon the question whether there ought not to be a revision of the tithe. I think Her Majesty's Government must perceive from the speeches which have been made from their own Benches the largeness of the undertaking they have entered upon. The alterations demanded by the hon. Member for the Maldon Division (Mr. Gray) and the hon. Member for West Dorset (Mr. Farquharson) are alterations of the whole fabric of the Bill. As to the Redemption Clauses, they have been condemned past all redemption by the speakers who sit behind me. There was no epithet of contempt which the hon. Member for West Dorset did not heap upon them. He said that under the terms fixed by this Bill no man in his senses would redeem, except it was in the case of small building property. Unless the Government intend to keep us sitting till September I should advise them to withdraw the redemption clauses. They are of no use to anybody; they are utterly unworkable, and I do not think they could ever be hammered into a workable measure. In dealing with property of this character, where the value is to be determined by bargain between the tithe owner and the tithepayer, I can conceive no worse Body to preside over that bargain than the Board of Agriculture—it is the most unfit body that could be chosen. As the hon. Member for West Dorset said, the person who would negotiate on behalf of Church property would be merely the life tenant. The life tenant is not the proper person to deal in bargains with respect to that description of property, and if the redemptions are carried out the very worst Body to remain Trustees of that description of national property is the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. In their whole framework the redemption clauses are to be condemned. I confess I see but one merit in this Bill, and that is, that it professes to transfer the burden of tithes from the tenant to the landowner. But in its present shape it does not do so at all. As long as you leave the tithe upon the land you cannot help interfering with the tenant, because the occupier is the person from whom the tithe is to be collected. You have no hesitation in making the occupier personally responsible, and you have done so, but you have not made the landowner personally responsible. In all these respects it appears to me that the Bill entirely fails to accomplish the objects you professed in our discussion last August. It does not relieve the tenant by transferring the burden of liability to the landlord, and it does not abolish distress. It keeps up distress in every case where it at present exists, and it does not provide anything adequate to meet the other evils of an action against the tenant and dismissal from his holding. Nor does it provide anything adequate for the revision of the tithe. Under these circumstances I confess I see extremely little in this Bill that should make it worth adopting, and certainly nothing that promises a settlement of the tithe question. Throughout this discussion I have endeavoured to conform to the invitation of the hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Talbot), and to discuss the matter quite apart from the question of the appropriation of tithe. I have said nothing with regard to disestablishment, although I have my own opinion on it. I have looked at the question only from the point of view of the effect the Bill will have on the occupier of land in England, which, I think, will be most prejudicial. With reference to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton), and the speeches we have heard from representatives of Wales, if I may offer a word of advice to them, it is that they should sever the question of Welsh Disestablishment from the question of English Disestablishment. I think it is unfortunate that in the Amendment of the hon. Member for Leicester the two questions are involved the one with the other; and it would be far better if the question of Welsh Disestablishment were made the subject of a separate Motion. When it is thus raised I shall heartily support it, for I believe the case for Welsh Disestablishment and the appropriation of Welsh tithes to education or other national purposes has been abundantly established and ought to be supported. No doubt we shall have to go into Committee on this Bill; but unless the Government alter the Bill as materially and as fundamentally as they altered the Bill of last year, I do not think there is the smallest chance of its passing into law. If they want to save the time of the House I strongly advise them to throw a great deal of their cargo overboard. If they confine their Bill to one or two clauses, one clause throwing the liability for tithe upon the landowner, and another clause giving the County Court power to equitably revise the rent-charge, then they might pass their Bill. But in the form in which it is now framed the Bill does neither of these two things. The occupier is left with all the grievances complained of, his burden is practically as before. A Bill which leaves the remedy of distraint and other remedies extant against the occupier, and which gives no equitable revision of the tithe, is a Bill so useless and so injurious that if a Division is taken I shall certainly vote against the Second Reading.

*(11.35.) THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The right hon. Gentleman always interests the House, and never more so than when he is replying to himself. He has devoted the body of his speech to explaining away, as far as he can, that cordial approval which he bestowed on these self-same propositions when they were before the House last Session. The right hon. Gentleman is frank; he says it is only recently he has found salvation on this subject; possibly what happened yesterday may have contributed to it; and I still cherish the belief that if he had spoken early yesterday we might have found him in the same mind he was in last August, when he assured the Government of his cordial support in passing these very propositions which he assures us now are impossible and untenable. The Amendments proposed last August by the Attorney General are not merely substantially but they are verbally identical with two of the clauses of the Bill to which the right hon. Gentleman objects to-night—Clauses 3 and 6. And what said the right hon. Gentleman then? He said—

> "What I desire is that the Government should introduce a clean Bill, if I may be allowed to call it so, such a Bill as that circulated in the form of the Amendments of the Attorney General. We will then consider that Bill, and deal with it as containing a principle we on this side of the House approve of, namely, that the tithe shall be put on the owner, and not on the occupier. It further contains the principle that the tithe shall be reduced when rents and profits are not adequate to meet it. We approve of that, and also of the principle that in future the power of distraint should be abolished."

Well, Sir, that is the Bill of this Session. We have adopted the very words which at that time met with the warm approval of the right hon. Gentleman, although I am bound to say they were not viewed with equal approval by the right hon. Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan); for I believe he was almost a martyr, or at least a confessor, for the principles he then expressed, and to which he has now converted his right hon. Friend. I am unable to follow the particular circumstances which have led the right hon. Member for Derby this year to sit at the feet of the right hon. Member for Denbighshire; but the fact is evident. There is only one respect in which the Bill of this year departs from the Amendments of the Attorney General; that is in the clause by which the Assessment Committee are substituted for the County Court for valuation purposes. Those who are familiar with county business will see how considerably the Bill of this year benefits the occupier of the land as compared with the Bill of last year; because this Bill makes it possible to bring down tithe to the level of the rateable value, which is formed on the basis of the land having paid a certain profit over the rental value instead of bringing it down to the net profit, which does not allow any margin of the sort. If the right hon. Gentleman has at heart the interest of the tenant-farmers, with whom he occasionally endeavours to coquet, though I think not very successfully, he should find in this clause an additional reason for supporting proposals on which he bestowed such encomiums last year. I do not know that I need occupy more time with the objections of the right hon. Gentleman; we may leave the speech of the one year to reply to that of the other. I think I have shown that the controversy is not so much between us and the right hon. Gentleman as between himself and one of his many former selves. For a moment or two I will refer to a few other speeches, though I am most unwilling at this hour to follow my hon. Friends and neighbours of Wales, who have made this discussion a sort of happy hunting ground for airing their views on Welsh disestablishment. I was glad to hear the words of counsel the right hon. Gentleman gave as to keeping separate questions distinct from each other; but I fear his example may, before long, be in the opposite direction. The Mover of the Amendment and others appeared to me to labour under a strange confusion and conflict of purposes, which made their speeches more interesting as psychological exercises than as contributions to serious debate. We have had hon. Gentlemen objecting to the Bill because it is a tithe owners' Bill, and we have had others objecting because they say it whittles away the property of the tithe. Not unfrequently we have heard hon. Gentlemen make use of both of these mutually destructive lines of argument as reasons for opposing the Bill. Most of the speeches which we have heard have answered each other; and it has been characteristic of more than one speech delivered below the Gangway opposite that it has answered itself. It is said that this Bill ought to be opposed because it will diminish what is called the national property in tithe, and we are told that this is national property because it belongs to the National Church, and then we are also told that the Church is no longer to be regarded as the National Church. We are told that the State ought to take possession of the tithe because it belongs to a National Institution, and in the same breath we are told that the Church is not a National Institution. Such are the mutually destructive arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and constitute the stock-in-trade of the usual disestablishment speeches we have listened to. But the hon. Member for the Eye Division (Mr. Stevenson) has discovered another pretext which excites our interest and curiosity more than the others with which we are more familiar. He told us we were to regard the tithe as not paid by the tenant—and there, I think, he was right—as not paid by the owner—and there, in a certain sense, he was also right—and then he proceeded to deduce from these established propositions the theory that the tithe is paid by the community, and therefore it was possible the community might become the recipients of the tithe. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is a landed proprietor; if he is, I trust he is not a mortgagor. If he is the proprietor of property subject to mortgage, he might as well declare that he does not pay the interest on the mortgage; it is paid by the community amongst whom he would otherwise spend his money. I remember he introduced this argument last year, and it struck me as one of the most interesting curiosities produced from the brain of hon. Gentlemen carrying on the search for novelties in politics. The speeches delivered by hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House have been very valuable contributions to the discussion. The hon. Member for the Maldon Division (Mr. Gray) has spoken with a vigour and independence which Her Majesty's Government are ready to honour and value; but though he made several suggestions as to the direction in which this Bill might be improved, he spoke generally in favour of it. The point he urged in regard to the separate assessment of buildings and land, and the deduction of the rateable value of buildings, is one the Government regard as well deserving consideration. There was another point he urged in the course of his speech with regard to the Board of Agriculture being allowed to appoint an arbitrator in the fixing the value of the tithe rent-charge which also appears to the Government to demand very careful examination. In the same way some of the suggestions of the hon. Member for West Dorset (Mr. Farquharson), although perhaps not so practical because a little more ambitious, are yet suggestions the Government are glad to have heard, and which will receive the attention of the House in Committee. There have been two speeches made in the course of the debate in regard to the Welsh part of this question which I should like to notice. The hon. Member for Montgomeryshire said Wales was unanimous against the Bill, and that if this Bill were forced through it would justify a Separatist movement for Wales.

MR. STUART RENDEL: What I said was a Separatist movement in this House.

*MR. RAIKES: A Separatist movement in this House, I suppose by Welsh Members. But having fired off his minor pieces of artillery, the hon. Gentleman proceeded to tell us this is a punitive measure. Looking at the *Times* I do not find that word in the report of his speech; but he used the expression. Well, I shall have an opportunity next week of addressing a Welsh constituency, and I may tell the hon. Member that the first and foremost measure to which I will call attention, as a claim of the Government on the confidence of the Welsh people, will be this very measure he so describes. I feel sure that any audience in Wales before whom the effect of the measure is fairly stated and not misrepresented and garbled by those who make it their business to misrepresent, and who live by misrepresentation.—["Oh, oh!"]—I am making no reference to any Member of this House — I have never known any Member to be guilty of that— I am sure that any audience in Wales would regard this measure as a boon, and by no means as punitive. Unfortunately there are those in Wales who in the vernacular Press make it their business to misrepresent; indeed, one of the qualifications for a Radical candidate in a Welsh constituency at the present time appears to be that he should not understand the arguments by which he is recommended to the electors. Although I am not master of the vernacular tongue, I, for my part, am prepared to tell the Welsh people the truth about this Bill; and I am sure that fair-minded men, of whom there are hundreds of thousands in Wales, so far from considering this as a punitive measure will regard it as a measure relieving the tenant-farmers from a grievance of which they have long complained. No doubt it will be punitive to the agitator, for it will deprive him of part of his stock-in-trade. I do not however, think that pity is likely to be excited for those who, having fostered and aggravated that grievance, are now doing all in their power to prevent its removal. I have only one word more to say, and that is with reference to the speech delivered two days ago by my right hon. Friend the Member for Denbighshire. He went down in hot haste and, addressing his constituents, he declared the tenant would under this Bill be put in a worse position, an infinitely worse position, than before; that he was liable to be put into the County Court, to be mulcted in heavy costs, to be turned out of his holding by an officer of the Court in whose clutches he would remain until he paid the uttermost farthing. I wish my right hon. Friend had read the Bill before he made such an astounding statement. My right hon. Friend enjoyed some reputation at the Bar. He must know that a more outrageous distortion of the whole provisions of the Bill was never attempted.

*MR. OSBORNE MORGAN: The right hon. Gentleman is quoting from an abbreviated report of my remarks. I was referring particularly to the 6th clause and to the occupying owner.

*MR. RAIKES: I am glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman will not accept the responsibility of the report. I have no doubt the most friendly reporter is sometimes obliged to abbreviate the reports of my right hon. Friend's speeches. But I am not able to give way altogether, for whether the right hon. Gentleman refers to the 6th clause or any other clause of the Bill, I should like to know how he can possibly justify the assertion that the tenant is liable to be put into the County Court and mulcted heavily in costs, because it is the owner who is to be put into the County Court, it is the owner who will have to pay costs, not the tenant. I know my right hon. Friend had no wish to misrepresent the Bill; but if he had he could not have done it more thoroughly. It is only right to expose such misstatements in this House when they are made by a man of light and leading in Wales like my right hon. Friend. The system adopted in the Bill, the system of collecting from the owner not the occupier, has been the immemorial custom in Scotland. It has been in existence, I believe, almost ever since the Reformation. We have the experience of the most practical people in the world to guide us, and we see the Church of Scotland existing under these conditions, and retaining the affection and sympathy of the people. Certainly it cannot be denied that the Church of Scotland exercises a powerful influence in the social life of Scotland. This is the system we are putting into operation, and I believe our proposal will meet the approval of the House of Commons as a body, and that we shall be followed by some of the Members of the right hon. Gentleman's own Party. Where is the Leader of the Liberal Party? He is, I presume, where the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was last year. He has not yet found salvation by listening to the eloquence of the Member for Denbighshire. The Bill, I believe, will be appreciated by the great majority of the people of the country, not as an attempt to aggrandise the Church, not to improve the position of landowners, but a serious effort to place the burden on the right shoulders, and relieve those who plead scruples of conscience against the payment of a just debt. We shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have placed in a position of security this property, which I believe to be the property of the Church, but which equally requires to be guarded and defended if, as others say, it is property belonging to the nation.

MR. PHILIPPS (Lanark, Mid): I desire, Sir, to be allowed to make a personal explanation. In the heat of debate last night I made use of an expression in reference to the hon. Member for East Bradford which, as reported in the *Times*, is not correct; but which in any case, because of its personal nature, I regret having used.

(11.55.) The House divided:—Ayes 289; Noes 164.—(Div. List, No. 39.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday 24th April.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE (PREVENTION) BILL.—(No. 80).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 19.

*(12.19.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I regret I was not in the House when this Bill came on last night. I understand that objection was raised to its being proceeded with in consequence of a fear on the part of some hon. Members that power would be given to the Local Government Board to approve the inclusion of certain diseases which are contagious in their character in the operation of this Bill. A similar question was raised last year, and I was then successful in assuring hon. Members that the word infectious distinctly excluded such diseases. I may say that my opinion is fortified by that of the Law Officers of the Crown. If, after consultation, hon. Gentlemen still think it necessary to expressly provide against this contingency, I will undertake to introduce the necessary words in the Interpretation Clause on the Report stage.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 20.

(12.21.) DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I desire to bring an important point arising out of this clause under the attention of the Committee. This clause provides that where the Act is put in force in any district in which a Local Act containing a similar provision is in force, such last-mentioned provision shall cease to be in operation. Now, I consider that to be altogether superfluous, and I propose to move that this clause be expunged, and that the Act shall not be put in force in any district in which similar provisions are enforced under a Local Act.

Amendment proposed, "That Clause 20 be omitted."

Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

*(12.22.) MR. RITCHIE: If the hon. Gentleman will be good enough to scan Clause 20 carefully he will find that if the provisions of this Act are by a Local Act enforced in any particular district this Act shall not apply.

(12.23.) Dr TANNER: My point is that this clause is superfluous. Surely every district is the best authority to decide what are its own requirements. I will appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast to say if he thinks it judicious the clause should pass in its present form.

(12.24.) Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I think the assurances we have received from the hon. Gentleman in charge of this Bill are satisfactory.

Dr. TANNER: Very well. In deference to my hon. Friend's superior judgment I withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill, as amended, to be considered upon Monday 14th April, and to be printed. [Bill 210.]

TREES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 70.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 9, after the word "shall," to insert the words "subject as hereinafter mentioned."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Objection being taken to Further Proceedings, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday 23rd April.

INLAND REVENUE REGULATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Jackson, Bill to consolidate certain enactments relating to the regulation of the Inland Revenue, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jackson, Mr. William Henry Smith, and Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 211.]

HOP INDUSTRY.

Ordered, That Sir Roper Lethbridge be discharged from further attendance on the Select Committee on Hop Industry.

Ordered, That Mr. Herbert Knatchbull-Hugessen be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Saturday, 29th March, 1890.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1.)
2. Crown Office.
3. County Councils Association Expenses.
4. Lunacy (Consolidation).
5. Army (Annual).

House adjourned at half past Ten o'clock to Thursday the 17th of April next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, 29th March, 1890.

The House met at Ten of the clock in the morning.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went;—and being returned;—

Mr. Speaker reported the Royal Assent to,—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1890.
2. Crown Office Act, 1890.
3. County Councils Association Expenses Act, 1890.
4. Lunacy Act, 1890.
5. Army (Annual) Act, 1890.

Whereupon, in pursuance of the Order of the House, of Friday 28th March, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at a quarter after Ten o'clock, till Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 31st March, 1890.

QUESTIONS.

EXPORT DUTIES IN THE SCILLY ISLANDS.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that an Export Duty of 6d. per cwt. has been for some time charged by Mr. Smith, the proprietor of the Scilly Islands, on all flowers exported from the islands; with what object has this Export Duty been imposed, and is such duty legal; whether he is aware that Mr. Smith imposes a duty of 5s. a year on every boat-owner, and in addition 1s. extra duty for every boat actually employed, and a duty of 1d. each for all shell fish exported from the islands, including lobsters, crayfish, and crabs; and whether Mr. Smith has carried out any works for the improvement of landing-places in the off islands out of the proceeds of those duties; whether he has been informed that in the past the captains of vessels anchored in the roads have in some instances refused to pay the charge levied upon such vessels, on the ground that no legal right existed to impose such charges; whether, in the Provisional Order constituting a Local Council for the islands, it is proposed to confirm the rights, if any, of Mr. Smith to levy these several duties; and whether he will take into consideration the advisability of withdrawing from the proprietor the right to impose some or all of these duties, especially those levied on the export of flowers and shell fish?

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Provisional Order which the Local Government Board propose to issue for the constitution of a Local Council for the Scilly Islands will not touch the question of any rights of Mr. Dorrien Smith to levy the duties or charges which are mentioned in the question. The Board are not empowered by the Act under which the Order is issued either to confirm any rights of Mr. Dorrien Smith to levy these charges or to withdraw from him any such rights. As regards these duties or charges they are matters with regard to which the Board have no jurisdiction whatever.

IRELAND—THE RIVER SLANEY.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that there are 36 preserves or several fisheries on the River Slaney between the town of Enniscorthy and the source of the river in which the respective owners have neglected to pay to the Board of Conservators the amount laid down by Act of Parliament, namely, 10 per cent. on the Poor Law valuation of such fisheries; why has this money not been collected from the owners in the same way as the Licence Duty required by rod and net fishermen; and with whom does the fault lie that this rate has not been collected up to the present?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): The Inspectors of Irish Fisheries report that at the present time there are only two fisheries in the River Slaney valued under the Poor Law, and that on each of these Licence Duty covering the 10 per cent. rate fixed by Statute has been paid. The point as to whether any other fisheries in this river should be rated is under the consideration of the Valuation Department. The 10 per cent. rate is recoverable by Boards of Conservators in the same manner as Licence Duty.

UNMUZZLED DOGS.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has come to the knowledge of the Police of Dunfanaghy that considerable alarm and annoyance has been caused to the inhabitants of that town by a ferocious dog, the property of Captain Brunker, of the Royal North Lancashire Regiment, stationed at Dunfanaghy; and whether this dog has frequently worried and maimed other dogs in the streets, unchecked by Captain Brunker; and, if so, whether he can say why this animal is allowed to go unmuzzled, and why its owner has not been prosecuted by the police?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am given to understand that no complaint has been made to the local police, nor has any circumstance come to their knowledge suggesting that there is any ground for such a complaint.

THE BELFAST SORTING OFFICE.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General how long the Controllership in the Belfast sorting office has been vacant; and when it is to be filled up?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): There is no such appointment as that of Controller in the Belfast Post Office. The appointment in question is that of clerk, and this appointment has been filled by the promotion of Mr. Grant, who has for some time been performing the duties of Controlling officer.

THE FASTNET ROCK LIGHTHOUSE.

MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will explain why tenders were not invited for the contract for boat attendance on the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse, which lapsed on the 6th of January last; when will tenders be invited, and what reason is there for the delay; when the late boat *Halcyon* was suspended from attendance, were any steps taken to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the allegations made by the crew of this boat that their lives and the lives of the light-keepers of the Fastnet Lighthouse were seriously endangered on more than one occasion through the boat's unseaworthy state; whether the Board of Trade were warned a few years ago that the boat was in a dangerous state; whether there is any intention to re-instate this alleged unseaworthy boat in attendance on the lighthouse; at what weekly cost has the steamship *Alert* been for weeks doing the work, and would he inquire whether the attendance could be carried on more cheaply and as efficiently by a local boat; how long is it intended to continue the *Alert* at this work; and is it a fact that a seaworthy boat has been offered to attend on the lighthouse at the old contract price?

Mr. Patrick O'Brien

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I have communicated with the Commissioners of Irish Lights, who inform me that tenders were not advertised for as usual on the expiration of the late contract, inasmuch as the question of revision has been for some time past under consideration, but that tenders will be immediately invited by public advertisement, for temporarily carrying on the attendance on Fastnet. In January last, the contractor reported that some of his crew complained that the *Halcyon* was not seaworthy; but on a subsequent examination made by order of the Commissioners by the commander of their steamship *Alert*, assisted by his ship's carpenter, the vessel was reported to be "perfectly sound" and well found in gear, &c. Should the former contractor tender again, and his tender be accepted, the Commissioners will not object to the employment of the *Halcyon*. No additional expense has been incurred through the steamship *Alert* being sent to Crookhaven to carry out the service, beyond the cost of the coal and stores expended, and she will continue the work until such time as a new contract for the temporary service has been arranged. The former crew of the *Halcyon* stated they had a boat, and would attend the Fastnet at the old contract rate per trip; but the Commissioners know nothing of the boat in question. With regard to the fourth paragraph of the question, I have to say that three years ago, when tenders were being invited, the Board of Trade were told by an intending tenderer that the boat of the existing contractor was unseaworthy and the complaint was forwarded to the Commissioners of Irish Lights, who are the Executive Authority in the matter.

SALES OF INCUMBERED ESTATES.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the area and value of the land which has changed hands under "The Sale of Incumbered Estates Act, 1848," up to 31st December, 1889?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Registrar to the Land Judges reports that there are no means of ascertaining the area of the land disposed of by sale during the period mentioned. The total receipts for land sold, which, however, includes house property, amounted from 1850 to December 31, 1889, to £54,565,205.

THE LAND COMMISSION.

Mr. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, inasmuch as originating notices served in 1887 by tenants in the County Sligo are still undisposed of, why the Land Commissioners departed from their practice hitherto of holding sittings in December as well as in July; and when the next sittings will be held? May I further ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, as he now proposes to proceed with the Land Purchase Bill, it is not desirable to expedite these proceedings?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes; I think it is desirable that the proceedings of the Court should be carried on as rapidly as possible; but I do not know that that is a matter which is directly affected by the Land Purchase Bill. In regard to the particular question on the Paper, the Land Commissioners report that no fixed rule has ever existed for holding sittings of Sub-Commissions at regular intervals or at specified periods of the year. The Commissioners are using every exertion to have the remaining applications received in the closing months of 1887 cleared off with every possible expedition.

CHARGE AGAINST AN IRISH MAGISTRATE.

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to the recent statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that Mr. Percy Morgan, J.P., had obtained money under the Arrears Act, in consequence of an affidavit joined in by him in which he swore that a sum of £30 rent was due to him by Bernard Clogher, his tenant, up to 1st November, 1880; whether he has been furnished with a receipt showing that on the 30th April, 1881 (one year and seven months prior to the swearing of the affidavit) Mr. Clogher had cleared up all rent due by him to the 1st November, 1880; and whether he will make inquiries into the matter, and consider whether the penalties specified in Section 7 of the Arrears Act should be enforced in the case?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): I have not yet had time to obtain the facts necessary to enable me to form an opinion as to the character of the transactions. I will, however, do so without delay.

Mr. SEXTON: Assuming the receipt to be genuine, does it not show that a swindle has been committed?

Mr. MADDEN: I am unable to give a complete answer to the question until I know what the facts of the case are.

THE ENNISKILLEN POST OFFICE.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will now grant the sum of money offered as compensation to David McGaw, of Enniskillen, in 1884, in settlement of the dispute in reference to the Enniskillen Post Office?

*Mr. RAIKES: A sum of £200 was offered to Mr. McGaw in 1884, on condition of his releasing the Postmaster of Enniskillen from an agreement to take a lease of the old Post Office premises. Mr. McGaw refused those terms, and the Postmaster was compelled to execute the lease. Under these circumstances, I am not now prepared to recommend that any sum of money should be granted to Mr. McGaw.

THE QUINN BEQUEST.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland why there is so great delay in the matter of the "Quinn Bequest" for Newry?

Mr. MADDEN: I gather from information received from my hon. Friend the Attorney General for England that this is a bequest which is being administered in the English Courts. If the hon. Gentleman will postpone the question I will cause full inquiry to be made.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I beg to give notice that I will repeat the question on an early day after Easter.

BOYCOTTING.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the trial of James Daly, a large merchant in the town of Carrickmacross, and three others from the same place, before Judge O'Brien, at

Londonderry, on Thursday, for having boycotted the Great Northern Railway (Ireland), three of them getting six months each hard labour, the other three months; whether he is aware that they were taken from the County Monaghan to the City of Derry; that all Catholics were asked to stand aside, some of the Catholics being Justices of the Peace, and that the greater number of the jury who tried the prisoners were Orangemen; whether the report is correct that a local solicitor, not employed in the case, advised the Solicitor General as to the Protestants who should not be allowed on the jury, and that a gentleman connected with the *Derry Sentinel* newspaper also advised Mr. Ross as to keeping off a Protestant named Hatrick; and whether care will be taken in the future that Catholics shall not be excluded from juries?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: My attention has been called to the conviction referred to in the question. It is the fact that the venue was changed from the County of Monaghan to the City of Derry in order to obtain a fair and impartial trial; but I have no information as to the religion of the persons who composed the jury, or of those who were directed to stand aside. The report mentioned in the third paragraph, that a local solicitor advised the Solicitor General as to the Protestants who should not be allowed on the jury, does not appear to be correct.

Mr. SEXTON: Can the right hon. Gentleman throw any light on the fact that three of the prisoners, who were not members of the National League, only got three months' imprisonment; while three others, who were members of the League, got six months' imprisonment, although the Lord Lieutenant has never exercised his full powers in that county?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir; I cannot throw any light upon it.

THE POSTMASTER OF MEARNS CROSS.

Mr. O'HANLON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether Thomas Kelly, of Esnacillager, or Mearns Cross, who was appointed postmaster some two years ago by an official from Dublin, was ever remunerated for his trouble and expense; and whether, inasmuch as Kelly set the boxes apart for stamps, letters, and papers, and kept them exclusively for that purpose

since, and that his place is eight miles from Clunes, County Monaghan, and three miles from the nearest post office, some remuneration will be paid to him for his expenses?

*Mr. RAIKES: I cannot find that any appointment was conferred on Thomas Kelly, as supposed by the hon. Member; but about the time stated the official delivery of letters was extended in the neighbourhood of Mearns Cross. I will, however, have further inquiry made on the subject.

THE CASE OF CAPTAIN RYE.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether Mr. C. J. Harold, one of the Justices who were trying the case against Captain Rye at Crookstown, County Cork, has been and still is employed by Captain Rye as bailiff or agent; and, if so, whether an intimation will be conveyed to him not to take any further part in the case in which there are four other magistrates adjudicating?

Mr. MADDEN: I have called for a Report upon this matter, but have not yet received it. I must, therefore, ask the hon. Member to defer the question.

Dr. TANNER: As the matter is one of great interest, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman deign to afford me information to-morrow?

Mr. MADDEN: Certainly, if I have received it.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, as President of the Irish Local Government Board, whether his attention has been directed to the action of Mr. John Rye at the Bandon Board of Guardians, and if it is correctly reported that Mr. Rye endeavoured to prevent the poor labourer, Jeremiah Corcoran, from obtaining out-door relief; whether he is aware that it was proved that Mr. Rye's object was to oblige Corcoran to take the bribe of 7s. weekly made by Captain Rye, now on his trial for shooting Corcoran; and that medical evidence was given the Board in support of Corcoran's claim; and whether the Local Government Board intend to take any action in the matter?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that it is the case that at the meeting of the Board of Guardians Mr. John Rye did state that if Corcoran required more than the 7s. a week offered by Captain Rye it would be given, as the latter did not wish that the man should be a charge upon the rates. The assertion in the second paragraph was made by a member of the Board, but was repudiated by Mr. John Rye. Medical evidence was given in the case. The Board decided to continue the allowance of 5s. a week sanctioned at their previous meeting. The Local Government Board are not aware of anything in the matter calling for action on their part.

DR. TANNER: Am I to understand from the right hon. Gentleman that the reports which appear in all the Cork newspapers, to the effect that Mr. John Rye said that Captain Rye had offered this man 7s. a week, and that there was, therefore, no necessity for granting him out-door relief, are not correct?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not seen the reports in the Cork papers.

DR. TANNER: Was not this money deliberately offered to Corcoran on behalf of Captain Rye, as a bribe, after having fired at him twice, not to give evidence against him?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have given the hon. Member all the information that has reached me. I understand there was no question of a bribe, nor am I aware that Captain Rye fired twice. That is the very question at issue.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: Was it not stated before Mr. Cecil Roche that the man had been tampered with; and did not Mr. Cecil Roche adjourn the Court so that he might have the man brought before him in order to ascertain whether he had been tampered with?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must ask the hon. Member to defer that question.

DR. TANNER: I will take the opportunity of raising the question of this discreditable transaction on the Vote for the administration of law and justice.

ROMAN CATHOLIC MAGISTRATES.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is a fact that the Dromore, County Tyrone, Bench of Magistrates is composed of nine Orangemen and one Roman Catholic, although an overwhelming majority of the people in the district are Roman Catholics; and whether he will draw the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter with a view to having some Catholic Magistrates appointed?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Lord Chancellor's Secretary informs me that the Dromore Bench appears to have been attended during the last three years by nine Local Justices. There is no information as to whether any of these Magistrates are Orangemen, nor as to the relative proportion of the religious denominations of the people in the district. I am also informed that the Vice Lieutenant of the county is always glad to consider the names of any properly-qualified Roman Catholics that may be submitted to him and the Lord Chancellor to give effect to such recommendations when made.

IRISH TRAMWAYS.

MR. DONAL SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the unappropriated residue of the £40,000 a year mentioned in "The Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1883"; and whether any, and, if so, how much, approximately of this residue will be applied, in addition to the £600,000 mentioned in "The Light Railways Act, 1889," towards carrying out the railways passed by Grand Juries under that Act?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Of the £40,000 mentioned in the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1883, the amount unappropriated is, I am informed, £16,691, which will be available for appropriation in addition to the £600,000 provided under the Light Railways Act of last Session.

THE ERASMUS SMITH ENDOWMENT.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when will the Educational Endowments Commissioners publish their scheme dealing with the Erasmus Smith Endowment?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that some delay has occurred in considering the scheme, owing to the retirement of Mr. Justice Naish, one of the Judicial Educational Endowments Commissioners, from the Commission owing to ill-health. But that the matter now only awaits the return from Circuit of his successor on the Commission.

THE CLONGOREY ESTATE.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mrs. Kelly, the tenant of the Clongorey holding referred to in the order of committal issued by the County Court Judge of Kildare, has been released from prison by the Executive; whether Mrs. Morrissey, a person not the tenant of holding, is still in prison, with her infant, one month old; and whether the Executive have resolved that this imprisonment shall continue?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As already stated in reply to a former question, Mrs. O'Kelly was discharged from custody on medical grounds. Mrs. Morrissey is still confined in prison with her infant. The Executive Government have no control in the matter. The woman is in custody by order of the County Court Judge, and can obtain her release at any moment by purging her contempt.

Mr. SEXTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the husband of Mrs. Morrissey is in prison also; and does he contend that this woman and her infant had any control over the farm?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not sufficiently acquainted with the case to answer the question. Mrs. Kelly was released from custody on medical grounds on the approval of the committing Judge. If medical grounds can be urged in the case of Mrs. Morrissey, I have no doubt that she will be discharged also.

Mr. SEXTON: As the husband, who is the only person to control her, is in prison, is it not the imperative duty of the right hon. Gentleman to ascertain whether there has not been an abuse of authority?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already said that the Government cannot interfere.

Mr. SEXTON: Then I will endeavour to press the question upon the attention of the House before the adjournment for Easter.

EVICTIONS IN DONEGAL.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the lately-contemplated evictions on the Stewart and Swiney Estates in County Donegal have been abandoned in deference to any suggestions made on the part of the Irish Executive; whether like suggestions were made to the agent of the Olphert Estate; and, if so, by whom, and what was his reply; how many families have been evicted on the Olphert Estate during the past week; and how many evictions were abandoned and by whose authority, and for what cause they were abandoned?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No suggestions as to the abandonment of evictions on any of the estates mentioned have been made by the Government, nor have I any reason to believe that the evictions on the Stewart and Swiney Estates have been abandoned, although it would seem that they have been for the most part deferred. I understand that one decree was executed on the Swiney Estate last week; 67 families were evicted on the Olphert Estate, all of whom, except those who were sub-tenants, had joined the Plan of Campaign and paid money into the war chest instead of to the landlord. Four evictions were abandoned at the instance of the agent to the property, owing in one case to the tenant having died the previous day, and in the other cases to the opinion of the military doctor present, that the inmates of the houses concerned were unfit for removal through illness.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a telegram was sent by the agent of the Olphert Estate to the District Inspector, threatening that he would carry out evictions himself next week if protection was not afforded, and why did he threaten to do this?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I know nothing whatever about the telegram. It appears as if it has been stolen.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN: Without discussing that question, I may say that, whether stolen or not, it is not forged. I beg to give notice that after the Easter Recess I will call attention more specifically to the evictions on this estate.

MR. HUGH GRAHAM, J.P.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any complaints have reached the Lord Chancellor of the conduct of Mr. Hugh Graham, J.P., of Rahoney, Dromore, County Tyrone, accusing him of drunkenness and threatening to assault a passenger in a railway carriage on the 27th of March, 1889, of being under the influence of drink while giving evidence in a Land Court on 23rd January, 1889, when Mr. Justice Litton had him removed from court by a policeman; and of being on another occasion drunk at the Omagh Railway Station and annoying ladies, when a policeman who was asked to arrest him refused, on the grounds that he was on railway premises; and whether the Lord Chancellor has inquired into these allegations, and with what result?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that the case of this gentleman is being inquired into by the Lord Chancellor.

LAND PURCHASE IN IRELAND.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the report of the professional valuer appointed by the Land Commissioners, as reported in *Cork Herald*, to inquire into the security offered by the holdings on the estate of Mr. H. B. O'Sullivan at Rahoona and Kilnamartyra, County Cork, for the repayment of the advance, from which it appears that the purchase money offered by the tenants was excessive, and that the combined interests of the tenants and landlord were not deemed by the valuer security for the money; whether it is a fact that the terms of purchase agreed upon by the tenants would have brought down the yearly payments to nearly 50 per cent. under the present rents; whether it is true that the rental in question was determined and enforced by the Receiver Department of the Chancery Court, and that many tenants were evicted by the court in default of payment of rack rents; and whether it is his intention to take any notice of the Report of the professional valuer?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Inquiry is being made into this matter.

Dr. TANNER: May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that the matter has been brought under the notice of this House again and again? How long will it take the right hon. Gentleman to give me some sort of a reply, or will he give me any reply at all?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot give the hon. Gentleman a reply until I receive the information that will enable me to answer his question.

Dr. TANNER: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will observe the usual courtesy towards hon. Members who feel it their duty to put questions in this House.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION.

Mr. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can explain how it is that some of the volumes issued by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1888 were allowed to appear without the valuable and exhaustive index which usually accompanies these interesting collections of manuscripts; and if, seeing that the value and usefulness of these volumes are largely enhanced by such an index, he will request the Historical Manuscripts Commission to prepare and publish an index to the manuscripts of the Duke of Rutland, the manuscripts of Earl Cowper, and any other volume of the series that is at present without an index?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham E.): It is distinctly stated in the first volume of the Report on the Duke of Rutland's manuscripts that the index to the first two volumes will be given at the end of the second. The second volume is now in the press. The index to the three volumes of the calendar of Lord Cowper's manuscripts (two of which have been issued) will be at the end of the third and concluding volume, which is practically complete and in the press. I am not aware that any other volume in the series is at present without an index.

THE CAMBRIDGE MISSION TO DELHI.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to a letter of the Bishop Designate of Durham, published in the *Times* of 26th March, respecting the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, in which it is stated that "This work was undertaken at the suggestion of the Indian

Government, who have given the site;" and whether this statement is accurate; and, if so, whether this is a departure from the traditional British policy in India of strict neutrality in religious matters?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In reply to the hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the "work" referred to by the Bishop Designate of Durham is St. Stephen's College, Delhi—an educational establishment of the Cambridge Mission. It has always been the practice of the Government of India to make grants in aid to all institutions calculated to promote the education of the people, and this practice has not been found to interfere with the religious freedom which the British Government guarantees.

THE MAHARAJA SCINDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the telegram of the Governor of India, of the 19th June, 1886, to the late Maharaja Scindia, was in reply to the dying request of His Highness, that his son should not be placed for instruction under a European tutor; and whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table the complete text of the letter of the late Maharaja referred to in the previous answer of the Under Secretary, and of any reply thereto?

*SIR J. GORST: The character of the request of the late Maharaja Scindia is not correctly described in the question; but it was undoubtedly his wish in June, 1886, that his son, then under 10 years of age, should be under native and not European tutors. This wish was for three years complied with, and the young Maharaja was left during that time under the charge of native tutors only. He is now 13½ years of age; and in the judgment of the Government of India his own interests and those of his people require that, while neither his religion nor caste will be in any way interfered with, he shall be under the charge of a British officer. The Secretary of State does not think it in the interest of the Public Service to lay on the Table either the letter or the reply.

Mr. Bradlaugh

THE 19TH MIDDLESEX RIFLES.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the date or dates or tenor of any charges of insubordination preferred against the bandsmen of the 19th Middlesex (Bloomsbury) Rifles; when such charges were investigated; and whether the accused were then severally present and heard in their defence, or whether he will cause inquiry to be made in the matter?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The commanding officer reports that the insubordination of the bandsmen consisted of persistent and long-continued defiance of, and opposition to, the bandmaster's authority. Apart from this general course of insubordination, they were insubordinate on December 11 and January 25, on which latter day some of them were very insolent to the adjutant. I have no doubt that the commanding officer satisfied himself that these men could not be retained as bandsmen consistently with discipline; and I do not contemplate any further inquiry.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that with reference to Bandsmen Andrews, C. Butler, W. Butler, and Norman, the colonel heard the charge against them, and acquitted them; while with reference to five others there has been no charge and no hearing against any of them? If the right hon. Gentleman can be satisfied that such was the case, will he direct inquiry into the matter?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: In the interests of discipline, I shall not go behind the decision of the commanding officer.

EXTRADITION TREATY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the new Extradition Treaty between Her Majesty and the United States has been duly ratified and is now in force; and whether, having regard to the long-standing interchange of criminal refugees between Anglo-Saxon States which may now be effectually stopped, the provisions of the new Treaty can be brought to the knowledge of the Chief Officers of Police throughout the country?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The new Extradition Treaty between Her Majesty and the United States has been duly ratified, and will come into force on the 4th of April. I am informed that the Secretary of State for the Home Department will call the attention of Chief Officers of Police to the Treaty.

RETURNS OF ACCIDENTS.

SIR WILLIAM PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any objection to include in the Return of Accidents (Factories, Railways, and Mines), notice of which appears in to-day's Orders, the localities, and the names of the factories, workshops, and mines in which accidents have occurred during the year ending 31st October, 1889?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am afraid I cannot comply with the hon. Member's request. It would add enormously to the labour and cost of the Return; and it would be wholly unprecedented, and not a little invidious, and would lead to conclusions possibly altogether erroneous as to the persons really responsible for the accidents, unless the cause of the accident were in each case explained.

VOLUNTEER CORPS.

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what regulations, if any, exist requiring that the Finance Committees of Volunteer Corps shall sanction the incurring of debt for their corps by Commanding Officers, as well as the paying of debt after being incurred by such officers?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: There are no specific regulations on the subject; but it is considered that paragraphs 704 and 705 of the Volunteer Regulations are sufficient security against improper administration of the funds of a Volunteer corps, either by the Commanding Officer or the Finance Committee.

FEES IN BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is the case that the fees payable to the Accountant of the Court of Session in respect of the Audit and Supervision of Bankruptcy proceedings are payable in stamps; whether these stamps are procurable only in Edinburgh; and whether, considering the large number of bankruptcy estates in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, he would arrange for the stamps being procurable in the Stamp Office, Glasgow?

*MR. JACKSON: Instructions have been given for a supply of the necessary stamps for denoting these fees to be sent at once to the Stamp Office in Glasgow.

THE CONTRACT FOR STATIONERY AND STAMPS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the new contract with Messrs. De la Rue and Company for the supply of stationery and stamps has been signed; and whether he has any objection to lay the contract upon the Table?

MR. JACKSON: The contract was signed and has full effect. No public advantage would be derived from laying it on the Table.

CUSTOMS OFFICERS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that officers of Customs on waterguard duty on the River Thames are employed continuously for periods of 24 hours without rest, and whether there is any bedding supplied to the *Harpy* cutter, where these officers are stationed; whether officers, when employed in the landing and examination of free goods fully entered, are obliged to give continuous attendance, when necessary, for 12 hours per day without any extra remuneration, during the eight months from March to October; and whether officers of the Outdoor Department are employed on clerical work at present for eight hours per day, whilst seven hours per day is the maximum for officials employed on clerical work in the Indoor Department, and what is the reason for this distinction?

*MR. JACKSON: It is true that officers of Customs employed upon waterguard duty on the River Thames are in attendance for duty contingent upon ships' arrivals for 24 hours continuously, being relieved from attendance for the succeeding 24 hours. In all such cases of employment officers do, as a matter of fact, receive some rest in addition to the time allowed for meals, which necessarily varies according to the exigencies of the work. Beds are furnished upon request to all stations where officers of Customs are liable to give attendance on waterguard duty for 24 hours continuously. Up to the present no request, however, has been received from the *Harpy* cutter. Customs regulations permit of the landing and examination of free goods fully entered between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. during the eight months from March to October. This privilege is, however, not often availed of to the full extent, and only in very exceptional cases does it happen that Customs officers are required to give 12 hours' continuous attendance upon this work. Officers of the Outdoor Department who are required to be employed on warehousing accounts are necessarily held available for such service throughout the hours during which the bonded warehouses are open, which at this season of the year are eight a day; in the winter months only seven hours a day. Officers so employed are inter-changeable with those who are actually working in the warehouses or upon landing stations for the like number of hours in each day. The hours of service for the Indoor Department are based on different requirements, and are rendered, not by outdoor officers, but by clerks appointed solely for clerical work.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: If it is true that the officers of the *Harpy* are employed continuously for 24 hours, will the hon. Gentleman see that beds are supplied?

*Mr. JACKSON: Beds are supplied whenever a request is made for them. No request has been made in this case. If the men think it more for their comfort that beds should be supplied, I am sure that any wish on their part to that effect will be complied with.

RAILWAY RATES—THE CARRIAGE OF MILK.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the Report made by Dr. Fox to the Rural Sanitary Authorities of Mid-Cheshire districts on the importance to the public health of cheap rates of carriage for milk; and whether the Railway Commissioners in deciding upon the matter are empowered to take into their consideration this most important question of the public health?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: I have seen the Report referred to, and agree as to the importance of cheap rates of carriage for milk. The Act of Parliament contains no special provision with regard to milk; but in fixing maximum rates for that as well as other articles, the Board of Trade must take into consideration all the circumstances affecting the case.

THE FOREST OF DEAN.

Mr. SAMUELSON (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that some grievance is felt by persons who own sheep which feed on common or unenclosed land in the Forest of Dean, who have hitherto obtained exemption from taking out licences for dogs kept by them solely for use in tending sheep, because they have this year been compelled by the Inland Revenue officers to take out such licences; whether this change has been ordered by the Department; and whether he will consider the propriety of removing the grievance by reverting to the former custom?

*Mr. JACKSON: The statutory exemption is in favour only of "farmers" in respect of a dog used solely in tending sheep or cattle on a farm. The Board of Inland Revenue have already considered the case of persons who own sheep which feed on the unenclosed land in the Forest of Dean, and have decided not to insist too stringently on the term "farmer," though it is rather doubtful whether colliers or small tradesmen become "farmers" by feeding sheep on common lands. But the Board do insist that any dog for whom exemption is granted shall be used solely for tending sheep or cattle, and any other use of such a dog forfeits the exemption and renders the owner liable to the penalty for keeping a dog without licence.

TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (University of London): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Royal Charter granted to the University of Trinity College, Toronto, gives it authority to examine candidates, and to issue degrees in the Faculties of Arts, Medicine, Divinity, Law, and Music outside the diocese of Toronto; whether the examinations in music, conducted on behalf of the University of Trinity College, Toronto, notified to be held in London at Easter, are still to be proceeded with; and whether he has considered the protest of the English Universities, the Royal Academy, and Royal College of Music?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, East Toxteth): This question is under reference to the Law Officers, and I therefore cannot, at present, make any statement as to the powers of this University. The Secretary of State has no control over the examinations, and has no information which would enable me to reply to the second paragraph of the question. The protests referred to in the concluding part of the question are under consideration.

INSANITARY CONDITION OF ASSIZE COURTS.

MR. CHANNING: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the statement of Mr. Justice Denman, at Chelmsford on Friday 21st March, that the Assize Court was in such an insanitary state as to be a perfect disgrace, and dangerous to Judges, counsel, and prisoners, and, further, to the similar comments made by Mr. Justice Smith and Mr. Justice Wills, on Thursday 27th March at Cardiff, as to the sickening smells in the Assize Court at Cardiff; whether attention was drawn by the Departmental Committee two years ago to the insanitary condition of these Courts; and whether he will take immediate steps, by representations to the Local Authority or otherwise, to have these and other Courts which may have been similarly complained of put into a proper sanitary condition?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir. The learned Judge has called my attention to the state of the Court at Chelmsford; but I have not seen the comments referred to as to the Cardiff Court. The duty of providing a proper Court-house and accommodation for prisoners awaiting trial rests with the Local Authorities. In consequence of the Report of the Committee of 1886, I made strong representations to all the Local Authorities throughout the country, including those of Chelmsford and Cardiff. At Cardiff many improvements have been made. With regard to Chelmsford, I again in July last asked the Justices to take the earliest opportunity of giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee. I am now making further inquiry with regard to both places.

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

MR. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state the number of officials in the Inland Revenue Department who have 40 years of service; whether it is true, as stated in the *Civilian* of 22nd March, 1890, that eight expectant Inspectorships and one Inspectorship are vacant; and when the vacancies may be filled up?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I do not think any public object would be served by inquiring into the number of officials in the Inland Revenue Department who have 40 years of service. The statement in the newspaper referred to by the hon. Member is inaccurate. There is no Inspectorship vacant. The expectant Inspectorships are new appointments, and there has been some delay in filling them up (owing to the examination of the books, &c., of the candidates) which will not occur again. But there are five, not eight, of these posts vacant, and they will be filled up in a few days.

THE CHELSEA SAVINGS BANK.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that, although two months have elapsed since the Chelsea Savings Bank was closed, and although large assets were available for immediate distribution, no dividend has yet been declared; and whether any steps can be taken to expedite the action of the Official Liquidator?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member is aware, of course, that the assets in such a case as that of the Chelsea Savings Bank are not available until all the claims have been got in by the Official Liquidator. Reasonable notice has to be given for this purpose, and the date fixed for claims to be sent in with regard to the Chelsea Savings Bank was the 18th of this month. An order was made four days later for payment in full to depositors under £5, including interest up to January 20 last, and of 15s. in the £1 to depositors of over £5, who were also offered facilities by the Liquidator for the transference of their moneys to the Post Office Savings Bank. The money for the actual payment of the dividend ordered will be placed to the credit of the Official Liquidator, and payment will be made after April 8. I trust that the hon. Member will recognise that all possible diligence has been shown in the matter.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): Will the Treasury call the attention of the Trustees and Managers of this bank to the recent decision in the case of the Cardiff Savings Bank?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: As it is a matter of great interest to all Trustees, I think it is probable that the case has been brought to the attention of these gentlemen in the same way in which the hon. Member's attention has been drawn to it. I do not know whether the Liquidators are aware of the judicial view taken by the Judge.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): May I ask when the Bill on this subject will be introduced?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The Judgments in the case referred to, which were only delivered a few days ago, and were of a very complicated character, will have to be considered in connection with the Bill.

CHINESE EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the negotiations with the Government of China on the question of Chinese emigration to Australia have been completed; and, if so, what settlement of the matter has been come to?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: No settlement in regard to this question has yet been arrived at. Some of the Colonial Governments, whom it was necessary to consult, have not yet expressed their views. Answers have now been requested of them by telegraph.

Mr. W. REDMOND: How long have the negotiations been going on? Early last Session, when I put a question upon the subject, I was told that the negotiations were nearly complete.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: That is so; but the hopes which were then entertained were disappointed. I am not able to say when the negotiations will be finally concluded.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Is the matter now awaiting the consent of the Australian Colonies?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: Yes, Sir; or rather of some of them.

PILOTS.

Mr. DILLWYN (Swansea Town): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been drawn to the pecuniary disadvantages the pilots of most of the ports of Great Britain and Ireland labour under by their inability to provide funds for the payment of Parliamentary and legal charges incurred in obtaining the necessary Provisional Order to enable them to obtain the unanimous recommendation of the Select Committee on Pilotage (1888), and the benefits of the Merchant Shipping (Pilotage) Act of 1889, which granted to the pilots a seat on every Pilotage Board; and whether the Board of Trade has any funds at their disposal which could be used in assisting the pilots to obtain the Provisional Order for direct representation, or whether he will introduce a clause in the Merchant Shipping Bill to facilitate the pilots in obtaining the requisite Provisional Order?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: Pilots who apply for Pilotage Provisional Orders are in no worse position than applicants for other Provisional Orders, such as those for Oysters and Mussels, Piers, Tramways, Gas and Water, &c. Applicants in all cases have to pay, towards the expenses of settling the Order, a fee the amount of which has been fixed by the Treasury; but they have no Parliamentary or House fees to pay, as Bills to confirm Provisional Orders are introduced by the Department. Legal charges in defending an application against opposition would, of course, fall on the applicants. There are no funds at my disposal which could be applied to the relief of one particular class of applicants; but if special circumstances should arise which would justify a representation to the Treasury to forego the fee, or a portion of it, I will direct such a representation to be made.

THE MAILS TO THE HEBRIDES.

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the steamer *Lochiel*, which carries the mails between Strome Ferry and Stornoway, is so small that when the weather is rough she is unable to make the trip, and that she has several times during the past winter not made the voyage; whether he is aware that Mr. MacBrayne, the contractor, frequently sends the *Lochiel* round by Portree, thus delaying her arrival in Stornoway till 1 or 2 in the morning, while the Portree steamer is sent to out-of-the-way places to pick up sheep, cattle, and other traffic; and whether he will take some steps to provide a good and regular mail service between Strome Ferry and Stornoway?

*Mr. RAIKES: Yes, Sir; I am aware that the steamer *Lochiel* has failed on certain occasions to perform the voyage between Strome Ferry and Stornoway on account of rough weather, when a larger and more powerful vessel might have succeeded. The deviations of route round by Portree, and the consequent deviations of the Portree steamer to which the hon. Member refers, have also, I am informed, been due to stress of weather. I regret that I am not in a position to incur the large additional expense which the employment of a more powerful steamer would involve, having regard to the fact that existing arrangements already entail a very heavy loss to the revenue.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE COLONIES.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if it is a fact that the United Kingdom is precluded by some Convention with Foreign States from entering into preferential postal arrangements with the Colonies of the British Empire; and, if so, what is the date of the Foreign Treaty which so limits the power of Her Majesty within Her own dominions; what are the terms of the restrictive clause; and for how much longer will it remain in force?

*Mr. RAIKES: I may, perhaps, usefully refer my hon. Friend to a reply which I gave in this House to the hon Member for Glasgow on the 11th of March last as bearing upon the present question. In that reply I said there was great reason to doubt if it would be competent to this country to reduce the ocean postal charge to its colonies to 1d. without withdrawing from the Postal Union; but I am not aware of any Convention which generally precludes the United Kingdom from entering into any preferential postal arrangements with the colonies of the British Empire.

Mr. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): Arising out of the answer, may I ask whether it is competent to enter into preferential arrangements without the consent of the parties to the Convention?

*Mr. RAIKES: I imagine that certain preferential arrangements would be possible without the consent of the parties to the Convention.

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Do the Government contemplate taking any immediate steps to obtain freedom from these embarrassing obligations?

*Mr. RAIKES: That is a question which I cannot answer.

Mr. J. LOWTHER: I will ask a question on the subject at a later date.

SEVERE SENTENCE.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of Isabella Pickup, who, in February, 1889, at the Manchester City Sessions, was sentenced to five years' penal servitude for stealing a pair of boots; and whether he will make inquiry, with a view to consider the justice of this sentence?

Mr. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; my attention has not been called to this case otherwise than by the question of the hon. Member. I gather from the calendar that there were numerous previous convictions for drunkenness, abusive behaviour, and felony against the prisoner. If the hon. Member has any facts in his possession which can be urged in the woman's favour I shall be happy to give them full consideration; otherwise I do not see any reason to interfere with the sentence.

THE DEATH OF W. H. GATCLIFFE.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why, in the private examination recently conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, Captain Wilson, inside Strangeways Gaol, Manchester, relative to the death of W. H. Gatcliffe, owing to the breaking of six of his ribs and his breast bone, two persons who could have given important evidence were not examined, namely, Dr. Kitchen, who made a *post-mortem* examination of the prisoner's body, and Henry MacBirnie, a prisoner who occupied the next bed to that of the deceased?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The persons named had already given evidence on three different occasions before the coroner, the stipendiary, and the Judge, and there was no reason for their further examination by the Inspector, who had their evidence before him, and exercised his discretion in a manner with which I am quite satisfied as to what witnesses could be most usefully examined by him.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Is it not the fact that on the occasion referred to the evidence was confined to an investigation as to whether a certain person was guilty or not; whereas the investigation of Captain Wilson would occupy a much larger field?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I do not think that the *post-mortem* examination was calculated to throw any light upon the matter.

MAJOR H. B. WOODS.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the eminent services of Major H. B. Woods during 22 years as an officer of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, the strong recommendation to mercy which accompanied the finding of the court martial on him last October, the fact that the language, in regard to which he was found guilty, having been due to a brother officer calling him a liar, and the numerously signed Petition in his behalf from the inhabitants of Plymouth where he was quartered, the Lords of the Admiralty could see their way to re-consider their confirmation of the sentence of the court martial, so that the country may not entirely lose the services of this gallant officer?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): The statements in the question

of the hon. Member give an inadequate and incorrect idea of the gravity of the offences and acts for which Major Woods was tried. The sentence of the Court and all the circumstances connected with this most painful affair have been fully and carefully considered by myself and the naval members of the Board, and it is our unanimous opinion that the sentence should not be interfered with.

CAMBRIDGE TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the Trustee Savings Bank at Cambridge is closed for the receipt of deposits; whether it is a fact that the Trustees and Managers have refused to afford through the Post Office Savings Bank Authorities the usual facilities to depositors to transfer their accounts on the spot; whether they have refused to allow the exhibition of the usual Post Office notices on the premises of the bank; whether Messrs. J. Mutlock and Co., bankers, of Cambridge, treasurers of the aforesaid Trustee Savings Bank, are making arrangements for the transfer to their own bank of a large number of the deposit accounts of the said Trustee Bank; and whether the National Debt Commissioners can take any steps to bring to the notice of depositors, who are generally ill-informed as to these matters, the usual facilities and information afforded by the Post Office Savings Bank to depositors, with the view of attracting the deposits of a closed Trustee Savings Bank to the Post Office Savings Bank?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The answer to the first three questions is, yes. As regards the fourth question, I am informed that statements have appeared in the local papers attributing this action to Messrs. Mutlock and Co. The action of the Trustees has been entirely new and unprecedented; but the National Debt Commissioners have no means of communication with the depositors of a savings bank. They have, however, given the Trustees full information as to the steps to be taken for closing the bank, adding that—

> "The Trustees will, no doubt, in the interests of the depositors themselves, induce as many of them as possible to accept transfers to one or other class of savings banks."

that is, Trustee Savings Banks. It is a question whether a provision should not be made in the new Bill compelling the Trustees of banks which are closed to inform their depositors of the facilities afforded by the Post Office Savings Banks.

MR. HOWELL: To whom do the deposits belong? Do they not belong to the Trustees and not to the Commissioners of the National Debt?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The Commissioners can only communicate with the managers and Trustees. They have no direct communication with the depositors. I believe that the Trustees are as anxious to increase the legitimate business of these banks as the hon. Member himself.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): Will the right hon. Gentleman make a formal request to the Trustees to put up the usual announcement in the building?

*MR. GOSCHEN: That has already been done by the direction of the Commissioners.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

MR. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether three Lower Division vacancies in the Accountant General's Department of the Admiralty have recently been filled up by persons who have passed no examination, except in the case of one who was for some time a boy copyist; whether about a dozen Civil Service writers in this Department were recommended for promotion under the Treasury Minute of 21st December, 1886, to the Lower Division, and that of this number three only have been so promoted; and whether, in the event of the appointments to the above-named vacancies in the Accountant General's Department being only of a temporary character, it is intended that steps should at once be taken to fill up the vacancies from the writers in the Department so recommended, and who have for several years discharged the work?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD, Lancashire, S. W. Ormskirk); The Civil Service Commissioners having exhausted their list of qualified candidates for Second Division clerks, three vacancies in the Accountant General's Department of the Admiralty had to be temporarily filled by copyists. It is not intended to promote any of the present copyists to the Second Division clerkships now vacant.

THE EASTERN SOUDAN.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government can now see their way to advise the Egyptian Government to expend a considerably larger sum than £500 on the relief of the inhabitants of the Eastern Soudan now perishing of famine, having regard to the terrible sufferings reported from that district, and to the desirability of establishing influences and connections which may make for the re-establishment of peace in the Soudan, and prevent the recurrence of like calamities?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The Egyptian Government, besides placing £500 at the disposal of the Governor of Suakin for the relief of the distress, has directed him to provide work for the able-bodied men. It is obviously undesirable to give gratuitous relief except to those who are physically unable to work. In answer to inquiries how a London Committee could best assist, Sir E. Baring has advised that £500 should be sent to the Local Committee, and it is hoped that the arrangements made by the Governor, with the aid of private charity, may prove sufficient to relieve the starving people without any serious demand on the taxpayers of Egypt. Her Majesty's Government are unwilling by any tender of their advice to the Egyptian Government to allow the impression to exist that that Government is insensible to the dictates of humanity.

SHIPPING GOODS TO THE UNITED STATES.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware of the great trouble, inconvenience, and loss caused to partners in firms shipping goods to the United States of America, through their being compelled personally to attend the American Consulate to make declarations on all consignments of the value of £10 and upwards; and whether it is not possible to come to an arrangement with the United States Government whereby this inconvenience may be avoided?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Minister has addressed the United States Government with reference to the memorials received on this subject from Chambers of Commerce, and has asked for modifications of the regulations in the sense desired. He has been informed that the regulations are undergoing revision, but has not been able as yet to ascertain whether the grievance complained of has been remedied.

RATING AND VALUATION (SCOTLAND).

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Government propose during this Session to re-appoint the Select Committee on Rating and Valuation (Scotland) which in 1888 took evidence but made no Report?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Buteshire): It was on the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) that this Committee was appointed in 1888. If a Motion is made for the re-appointment of the Committee, the Government will not oppose it.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): Then I beg to give notice that directly after the Easter Recess I will move for the re-appointment of the Committee.

ASCENSION ISLAND.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can state what is the value of the victualling stores supplied from Ascension to the vessels of the West African Squadron during the last two years, or either of them?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: The value of the victualling stores supplied from Ascension to the ships on the West Coast of Africa station amounted during the two years ended September 30, 1889, to about £10,500, or an annual average sum of £5,250. This is exclusive of the value of the stores issued to the residents on the island, amounting to about £3,000 per annum.

THE OATHS ACT.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Solicitor General whether he is aware that at Lynn County Court, on March 19th, Robert Green claimed to affirm under "The Oaths Act, 1888;" whether the County Court Judge is correctly reported as having asked: "Are you a Quaker?" and on being answered in the negative, refused to allow Green to explain how he was entitled to affirm under "The Oaths Act, 1888," saying, "You must go to argue that somewhere else;" and whether any steps can be taken to bring "The Oaths Act, 1888," to the official knowledge of the Judge?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir E. Clarke, Plymouth): In reply to the hon. Member, the Attorney General is informed that the statement in the question does not fully represent what passed. The learned Judge states that he understood the defendant was claiming a right to make a speech and not asking to be allowed to affirm, and on his telling him he must be sworn, or if he had conscientious objections to taking the oath he might affirm, the defendant at once consented to be sworn and gave evidence. The learned Judge seems to be acquainted with the provisions of "The Oaths Act, 1888."

NAVAL AND MILITARY COUNCIL OF DEFENCE.

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government, when considering the suggestion of the Royal Commission respecting the formation of a Naval and Military Council of Defence, will further take into consideration the opportunity afforded by the establishment of any such Council for providing in some form for the representation upon it of outlying portions of the Empire contributing to the maintenance of the regular Naval and Military Forces of the Crown?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): The subject to which my hon. and gallant Friend refers will undoubtedly receive the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, but he will, I am sure, realise that it is surrounded with very great and serious difficulties.

POSTAL ORDERS.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that large numbers of cheques are drawn for one guinea or two guineas in payment of subscriptions to charitable and other institutions, and greatly to the inconvenience of the bankers; whether he will supply the public with postal orders for one guinea and two guineas respectively; and whether he will extend the time so as to make postal orders payable within 12 months of issue, without fine or increased charge?

*MR. RAIKES: I have no information as to the number of cheques drawn for sums of a guinea or two guineas respectively, though I have no doubt that they are numerous, but I know that the idea of introducing a postal order for a guinea had to be abandoned owing to the opposition of bankers. As regards the last part of the question, the hon. Member does not seem to be aware that the limit of time during which postal orders are payable without fine was reduced in deference to the wishes of this House from 12 months to three, when the Act of Parliament was under the consideration of the House.

RAILWAY MESSAGES BY TELEGRAPH.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to the evidence of the late Mr. C. H. B. Patey, C.B., Third Secretary of the Post Office, given before the Select Committee on the Revenue Estimates, that, under the terms of the Telegraph Act, the Post Office had, as part of the bargain for its way leave, to transmit messages sent on the business of railway companies free of cost; that in 1871 there were transmitted 97,000 such messages, and in the year 1888 961,000 messages; that these railway messages would represent something like 1s. a message at the least, the loss of revenue on them being nearly £50,000 a year; and that the railway companies had found it more convenient to do their business by means of the Telegraph Office for nothing than to do it in other ways; and whether he will at once take steps to introduce a Bill into Parliament to put an end to this arrangement?

*MR. RAIKES: I am well acquainted with the evidence in question which, the hon. Member may recollect, was given in my hearing. He may also recollect that he was present in this House on the 28th March last year, when attention was called to the evidence by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford, and the hon. Members for Bethnal Green and South West Notts; and I would refer him to the remarks which I made on that occasion. I may add, for the information of the House, that legal action on the right of the railway companies to send certain classes of messages is now pending, and, until the result is known, I shall not be in a position to consider the question of the further relation of the Post Office to the companies in this matter.

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION.

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, whether his attention has been called to the Report of the Commission on Industrial Education, made to the Legislature of Pennsylvania, 1889, of which 10,000 copies were ordered to be printed; and whether he will consider the propriety of directing the Science and Art Department, South Kensington, to issue, as a handbook for the use of such technical schools as may require it, a series of plates of the nature of those engraved in the Annual Report of the Pennsylvannia State College, which are stated at page 304 of the Report of the Commission above referred to, to be "the best available illustration of a progressive series of exercises for a course of the mechanic arts?"

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I have seen the Report to which my hon. Friend refers, but valuable and instructive as the plates are, it is not proposed to issue a handbook because it has not been found expedient for a Government Department in this country to publish text-books. No doubt, as manual instruction is henceforth to be included in the curriculum, many books on the subject will be produced by private enterprise and may to a large extent be based on the Report in question.

IRELAND—CASE OF MR. McDERMOTT.

MR. THOMAS GILL (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what have been the costs incurred by the Crown in the various remands of Mr. McDermott, of Clanricarde, including the cost of transporting and escorting him on each occasion from the gaol to the locality in which the secret Court before which he has been summoned has been held?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already answered this question in reply to a query of the hon. Member for Cork.

Mr. GILL: Is not the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. McDermott has already been for 10 weeks in gaol, and is he not of opinion that the time has now arrived to grant his release?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am aware that Mr. McDermott is in prison because he has refused to answer the questions which have been put to him.

Mr. GILL: Has he refused to answer any question that may be put to him in open Court, and has he not been brought 10 times from Galway Gaol to Ballenasloe, a distance of 40 miles?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I only know that he is detained in custody because he refuses to give evidence in regard to the commission of an outrage.

Mr. GILL: Has he not offered again and again to give evidence in open Court?

[No answer.]

THE EDUCATION CODE.

Sir W. HART DYKE: I beg to give notice that on Monday, April 14, I will move for leave to bring in a Bill for the purpose of making operative certain articles in the new Education Code with reference to instruction in evening schools and the proposed new Grant to small schools in rural districts.

Mr. MUNDELLA: Will the Bill be confined to those official subjects?

Sir W. HART DYKE: Yes; to those special subjects.

PUBLIC TRUSTEES AND TRUST COMPANIES' BILL.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question, of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether the Government will consent to the Public Trustee Bill and the Trust Companies' Bill, which have now come down to this House, being referred to a Select Committee to inquire and report upon their provisions?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes, we should certainly propose that those two Bills should be referred to a Committee, but I am not quite certain whether it should be a Select Committee specially appointed for the purpose or whether it should be one of the Standing Committees.

CRETE AND TURKISH WAR VESSELS.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I also desire to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a question, of which I have given private notice, namely, whether there is any foundation for the statement in the *Times* of this day telegraphed from Athens that several Turkish war vessels cruising around Crete have endeavoured to disguise their character by flying the British flag; and whether, if the statement is found to be true, the Government will take prompt notice of such unwarrantable conduct?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: We have heard that there was a rumour at Athens that one or more Turkish men-of-war had been seen in the direction named, under Italian colours. No mention was then made of such use of British colours, nor have the Admiralty heard anything concerning these allegations.

Mr. BRYCE: May I ask whether, considering the positive way in which the statement is made in the *Times*, the right hon. Gentleman will take steps to inquire whether the statement is true?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: The Foreign Office are hardly bound to make inquiry on every statement that appears in the newspapers. I would remind the hon. Gentleman that this country has ships in those waters, and that if any improper use is made of the British flag it is quite certain to be reported to the Admiralty.

THE CONVICT DALY.

Mr. SEXTON: May I ask if the Home Secretary has any statement to make in reference to the prisoner Daly?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have made it clear on former occasions that the visitors have written in answer to an application made to them stating that they expect their Report to be ready in the course of the Easter Recess.

EPIDEMICS IN IRELAND.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON: I wish to ask whether the Chief Secretary for Ireland is aware of the fact that influenza or some other epidemic has seriously interfered with the attendance of school children in Ireland; and whether he will give any instructions on the subject?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I will communicate with the authorities on the subject.

CHARITY COMMISSION SCHEMES.

SIR R. PAGET: I wish to ask the hon. Member for Penrith whether the Charity Commissioners will be prepared to send to the clerks of County Councils a copy of every draft scheme to be published by the direction of the Commissioners, for the regulation of a charity administered for the benefit of any parish or place within the jurisdiction of the County Councils respectively?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The Charity Commissioners will comply with the request of any County Council which passes a resolution requesting to be supplied with a copy of every draft scheme for a charity in that county published after the date of such resolution.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I wish to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a question of which I have given him private notice. It is whether the attention of the Government has been called to the cablegram received by my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland with reference to the Newfoundland Fishery Question, in which it is alleged that the Government of Newfoundland deny having consented to the *modus vivendi* between Her Majesty's Government and France, alleging that it had been only partially submitted to Newfoundland? Is it true that the Government of Newfoundland did not consent to the *modus vivendi* at present existing, and is it true that the despatches were only partially submitted to Newfoundland?

*(4.41.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: With regard to the questions now put by the hon. Member, I answered similar questions last week. I may state that the *modus vivendi* was submitted with a view to meeting, as far as possible, the views of the Government of Newfoundland. In its original form it was not consented to by the Government of Newfoundland, but a full explanation of the whole case has been sent to the Government of Newfoundland, and the objection which has been expressed to it is, I think, founded on a misapprehension. I think it would be much better to wait until the Government of Newfoundland is in full possession of the facts of the case.

MR. W. REDMOND: Considering the extremely excited condition of public opinion in Newfoundland over this matter, do not Her Majesty's Government consider it vital to cable out the full text of the arrangement come to with France; and do the Government intend to invite representatives of Newfoundland to this country?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have expressed their desire that representatives from Newfoundland should come over to this country for the purpose of consultation, but I am not authorised to make any further communication.

MR. W. REDMOND: In consequence of the reply I have received I beg to give notice that I shall call attention to this subject on the Vote for the Foreign Office.

THE NEW EDUCATION CODE.

MR. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman when his Bill will be introduced?

SIR W. HART DYKE: Monday, 14th April.

MR. MUNDELLA: Will it be confined to the subjects which have been mentioned?

SIR W. HART DYKE: It will; that was my object in making the statement.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Fifth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) (NAMES OF LANDOWNERS).

Return ordered—

"Giving the names of the landowners the purchase of whose properties under "The Land Purchase (Ireland) Act, 1885,' has been sanctioned by the Irish Land Commission since the 1st day of January, 1889, with the following particulars against each name:—(a) area of the property; (b) county in which situated; (c) total rental; (d) valuation; (e) amount of purchase money; (f) total number of holdings on the estate (in continuation of Return, No. 81, of Session 1889.")—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

ARMY (COURTS MARTIAL.)

Address for—

"Return for 1889, for each Regiment of Cavalry, Battery of Artillery, Company of Engineers, and Battalion of Infantry, respectively, of the number and proportion to average strength of, first, General; second, District or Garrison and Regimental Courts Martial, distinguishing those in which the offences are only in relation to Enlistment; third, Minor Punishments; fourth, Desertions; and, fifth, Stations (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 308, of Session 1889.")—(*Sir Frederick Fitz-Wygram.*)

EDUCATION (PRIMARY INSTRUCTION IN PARIS.)

Address for—

"Copy of Letter from Sir B. Samuelson, Baronet, M.P., to the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, concerning Public Primary Instruction in Paris."—(*Sir William Hart Dyke.*)

NEW MEMBER.

Edmund Francis Vesey Knox, esquire, for the County of Cavan (West Cavan Division).

MOTIONS.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (MORNING SITTING.)

(4.47.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do meet To-morrow, at Two o'clock."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman state what is to be the order of business?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope to be able to make sufficient progress in Supply this evening in order to be able to move the Adjournment to-morrow. In that event, there are one or two Bills which will not occupy more than two minutes. After that we will move the Adjournment, which will take effect at the rising of the House at seven o'clock.

MR. SEXTON: What Bills?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The South Indian Railway Purchase Bill, and I hope we may possibly take the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill.

DR. TANNER: How much money—how many Votes will the right hon. Gentleman require this evening?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope it will be possible to take Class 1. Some of the money is required for buildings, and it is desirable that there should be no delay in obtaining it, in order that the buildings may be proceeded with during the most favourable time of the year.

MR. SEXTON: I understood that no Irish Supply was to be taken before the 17th April.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: That is the last of the Votes in Class 1, and it will not be taken.

Question put, and agreed to.

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the Procedure in regard to Private Bills relating to Scotland, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 214.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to call attention to the increased responsibilities and duties of certain officials employed in the Customs Department during the last eight years, arising from recent legislation, Departmental changes, and developments of trade and shipping; and to move—

"That in the interests of the Revenue and the commercial and shipping transactions of the United Kingdom, it is expedient that special inquiry should be made into the organisation of the Customs Department, particularly as regards the position, the hours, and the overtime of the outdoor officers, upon which subjects the Royal Commissioners on Civil Establishments were unable to report, and therefore remitted to the Treasury to deal with."

I do not, Sir, wish to weary the House, or to approach this question in a spirit of captious criticism, but rather to deal with it on broad and general grounds, believing as I do that inquiry is necessary and that it should be an inquiry which will go to the root of the matter. The Customs Department performs two great functions. First, the overhauling and minute examination of all ships, of all cargoes, of all passengers, and of all the effects of passengers coming into the Kingdom, and various other complex duties connected with bonded warehouses, the export trade, transhipments, and the gauging duties. This work is done by the practical or out-door staff of the Customs. The second function is the recording of the results of such overhauling and minute personal examination by the practical staff. This recording is done by the clerical or indoor staff. Now, the central superintending establishment over this duplex Organisation consists of a Board of three Commissioners, a Secretary's Office, a Surveyor General's Office, an Accountant General and Controller's Office, a Statistical Branch, and a Bill of Entry Branch. The superintending establishment is composed of 207 officials in the proportion of about 3 of the practical staff to 204 of the clerical. Two out of the three Commissioners were Treasury clerks; the third was a War Office clerk, while the Secretary was also a Treasury clerk. Thus, the general administration is almost exclusively in the hands of gentlemen without previous practical experience of Customs work. The rest of the Customs Department is organised in establishments at the various ports, such as London, Liverpool, and elsewhere, and each of these Departments at each port is divided into indoor and outdoor branches—or, as I prefer to call them, the clerical and practical staffs. The duties of the clerical staff of a port establishment do not materially differ from clerical work in other Departments of the State. But the duties of the practical staff at the port are heavy, complicated, peculiar, and various. The practical or outdoor staff are on duty by night as well as by day; they are exposed to all the vicissitudes of the weather. Rain or shine, fog or storm, in rough or smooth water, their work must be done. Upon the activity, vigilance, and accuracy of these officers, the Customs Revenue depends. Upon their tact, temper, and judgment also depends the smooth working of the gigantic foreign trade of the country. In 1888, the aggregate tonnage of ships dealt with was 68½ millions of tons. The value of the imports and exports dealt with by the practical staff in that year amounted to £685,500,000. The net duty from weighing and gauging all dutiable goods and assessing Customs Revenue amounted to £21,000,000. Then they have the keeping of the accounts of goods in 308 bonded warehouses. They have charge of Quarantine Duties, the examination of passengers' baggage, of ships' stores, of dangerous oils and explosives, and of cattle, and they have to see that there is no evasion of the law with respect to indecent publications and to British trade marks. They have to verify statistics with regard to imports, and to enforce the law respecting copyright. They have also their duties connected with the bonded warehouse, including the examination and certification of the shipments of all bonded and draw-back goods, and the authorisation of all the deliveries from bonded warehouses. Taking the number of the examining staff, every examining officer overhauls annually, on the average, over 40,000 tons of shipping in the year, supervises over £400,000 of imports and exports, and assesses over £12,000 of Revenue. That justifies the statement that the duties of the practical staff are complex and various. In order to bring the ground for inquiry into as small a focus as possible, I will now confine myself to illustrating my point by taking the establishment of the Port of London as exhibiting the general conditions which I think should be inquired into. The establishment of the Port of London consists of a clerical staff of 92, and of an outdoor staff of 1,278; and I find that the average salary of the clerical staff is £293, whilst the average salary of the outdoor staff is only £140. Now, this exemplifies sufficiently one of the points which, I think, demands careful examination, namely, that the average salary of the practical or outdoor staff is less than half the salary of the clerical or indoor staff. This great discrepancy in the salary averages is a matter which, I think, in view of what I have brought before the House, demands serious and careful investigation. I can only account for it by remembering that the Treasury itself is a thoroughly clerical Department, and naturally has a fellow-feeling for the clerical branch of the Customs. As regards hours of work, those of the clerical branch are much the same, I understand, as those of the other clerical Departments of the State, but the hours of duty of the practical outdoor staff are longer—so far as my information goes—than those of any other Department of the Civil Service. I find that officers at the larger ports are often on duty and, perhaps, without rest, for alternative, continuous, periods of 24 hours, and that Sundays and Bank Holidays are included. I find that the Chairman of the Customs, commenting on that statement before the Ridley Commission, observes that—

> "When on duty for 24 hours, the officers are allowed time for meals and for such rest and sleep as the Service will permit."

Well, I think that is a very mild qualification, and one that supports my argument for inquiry. I find that the information was laid before the Civil Service Commission by Mr. Hinks, the head of the Water-guard, that in each 21 days a man is in attendance 224 hours, or 10¾ hours in every 24, and is on duty, at most, every other Sunday. That was also a qualifying remark on the broad statement of long hours that was laid before the Ridley Commission by the outdoor Department. I think it will be seen by every one who peruses the Report of that Commission, or reads the Appendix, that it is officially acknowledged that the hours are longer than in the clerical Departments of the Services. Then the outdoor staff have less chances of promotion than the indoor. They receive, on an average, less pay, and they are longer on duty, and yet they do all the practical work of the Customs Department. The origin of this state of things, so far as I am able to ascertain, began in 1882. In that year there was a great re-organisation of the Customs Department, and, as far as I can make out, it resulted in the rapid promotion and increased payments of the clerical heads of the Customs, and an increase of work and reduced chances of promotion to the outdoor practical staff. Previous to June, 1882, the clerical work of the warehousing branch of the Port of London was performed by an indoor special clerical staff of 269 officials with average salaries of £250 a year; but in 1882 the work was transferred as an additional duty to the outdoor services, performed by the practical officers, whose average salaries at that time were about £128 a year. In order to compensate the outdoor staff for the unpleasant effect of this amalgamation a new classification of the staff was not only promised, but actually approved of by the Treasury. In effect, that classification was to provide superior appointments and improvements in the status of the officials in the higher Department of the outdoor branch of the Customs. But the promise has not been kept. The classification was altered, and the benefits promised by it were withheld. In the revised classification the number of higher posts was cut down and a new lower and cheaper grade of outdoor officers—called "assistants"—was added at the bottom of the classification. The increase at the bottom was to compensate for the cutting off at the top of those good appointments and better prospects afforded by the original classification. I find that since 1882 the general Customs staff has been materially reduced, and I find also that there are now only 112 persons employed overlooking and superintending the outdoor Customs work for the whole of the ports of the United Kingdom. Since 1883 the practical staff of the Port of London has been reduced by something like 22 surveyors and 8 first-class examining officers; and I find on comparing the Board of Trade Shipping Returns of 1882 and 1888 that while, on the one hand, the clerical Department has been cutting down the superintendents and practical officers of the Port of London, the aggregate number of tons of shipping entering the port has been 1,500,000 tons greater in 1888 than in 1882. Now, the result of all this, however satisfactory it may have been to the clerical Department, has been that the work of the practical Department has been increased, whilst the promotion has been retarded. I find that, taking the last decade and dividing it into two portions of five years each, in the five years ending 1888 there were 43 less promotions from second-class examining officers to first-class examining officers than there were in 1883; and I find that in the five years ending 1883 the promotions of inferior grades to assistant examining officers and examining officers and gaugers were 425, but in the five years ending 1888 the number of promotions had fallen to 311, so that the decrease of promotions for these two periods, and for that particular step of advancement, has been 114. I find that in 1888 there were only six promotions to first-class, while the average of such promotions in previous years was 28. So that, with increased duties, there has been a decrease of prospects of promotion in the Outdoor Department. In order, as it appears to me, to get the practical work done with less hands, and to avoid increasing the cost, the Department has had to resort to the plan of having temporary makeshift appointments—acting men and acting assistants who belong to the lower grade, and whilst doing the work of the higher grade, receive the pay of the lower. This is naturally a grievance to the lower grade officers, and my point is that on broad grounds of public policy it is a bad system that responsibilities assigned to a particular class of individuals should, because you have an insufficient number of such men, be imposed on men of an inferior grade. Thus inferior officers of the practical staff are employed on superior duty without extra remuneration, although the work has been increasing, a thing which, in itself, it seems to me, deserves very searching inquiry. There is a matter in connection with this subject to which I think I am justified in drawing the attention of the House. I am not going to labour the point, and I am not going to say that the statistics I give are such as justify a strong pronouncement of opinion; but they are curious and interesting, because it does appear to me that as it is the practical staff that stands between this country and evasion by dutiable goods, and on their efficiency and their work depends the revenue of the country, there should be a very minute inquiry to ascertain whether all the changes which have occurred since 1882 to the detriment of the practical staff have not led to a decline, to some extent, of that revenue. During the past eight years, whilst these changes which have tended to diminish the number of the practical staff were occurring, there has been a great advance in our national business. The tonnage of the ships entering and clearing the ports of the United Kingdom in 1888 was 7,000,000 tons greater than 1882. That means a largely increased number of ships, and means a great increase of personal exertion in overhauling 7,000,000 tons of additional shipping. Then, if you take the Export and Import Returns of 1882, and compare them with those of 1889, you will find that goods of the value of £21,000,000 more in the last-named year than the former had to pass under the supervision and constant examination of the practical outdoor staff. The increase in the supervision of passengers and their baggage it is impossible to state, for the reason that whilst there is a record kept of immigration and emigration from and to places outside Europe, there is none in regard to European immigrations and emigrations. In the record that exists, I find that the emigration and immigration figures in 1882 were 78,000 passengers, whereas in 1888 they were 129,000, or an increase of 64 per cent. It is fair to assume that in the unrecorded emigration and immigration the increase has been as great. Therefore, it will be seen that there has been an increase in the amount of work the outdoor Custom House officers have had to perform. But in addition to that, this House has imposed and placed fresh duties on the practical staff since 1882. The enforcement of the provisions of the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887 is one of these fresh duties. The new work created by the excellent Wine Duties Act of 1888 is another. Then there is the Registry of Fishing Boats Act of 1886, with respect to which new duties are imposed and increased labour is also thrown on them by the new system of gauging casks to the quart instead of to the integral gallon. There is also the testing of spirits for "obscuration." It is a curious fact that, in spite of all the increase of trade and business, the revenue from Customs Duty stagnates in a way not to be satisfactorily accounted for by the alterations made in the amounts of the duties. The Customs Returns, oddly enough, show that the revenue collected has, since 1882 fallen as the number of officers of the outdoor department has diminished. I do not base any strong argument upon the fact; I merely notice the coincidence. I have not been able to work out the variations due to alterations in duty, and there are various nice considerations to be taken into account before it would be safe to lay down the doctrine that the revenue has fallen, because the number of officers has been reduced, and the number of duties imposed upon the Department has increased. There is another odd fact. As the number of officers of Customs has been reduced, the number of seizures of smuggled goods has increased. It is interesting in this respect to compare the figures of 1882 with those of 1889. In 1882 the number of established Customs officers was 5,223. In 1889 it had fallen to 4,595—a decrease of 628. The revenue collected in 1882 was £22,175,937, whilst that collected in 1889 was only £21,888,603—a decrease of over a quarter of a million. The seizures of smuggled goods in 1882 numbered 1,698, and in 1889 they had risen to 4,354—an increase of 2,656. The convictions for smuggling in 1882 numbered 1,516, and in 1889 3,294—an increase of 1,778 cases. The number of seizures of tobacco and spirits had in seven years increased by 113 per cent. When it is remembered that goods seized are liable to treble duty, it is evident that in order to make smuggling profitable there must be at least some three successful evasions of duty to compensate for each failure. Therefore, we may approximately compute the number of cases of smuggling last year at some 10,000 cases, over 8,000 of which were not detected. The revenue from unmanufactured tobacco, which is most likely to be affected by an increase in smuggling, is tolerably stationary, in spite of the increase of population in the last decade. The consumption of tobacco per head of the population given in the Statistical Abstract is, of course, based only upon the consumption of tobacco which has paid duty. I find that in 1868 it amounted to 1·35 lbs., whilst in 1878 it was 1·44 lbs., showing an increase of 9-100ths of a lb. of tobacco per head. But this ratio of increase has not been kept up, for in the 10 years between 1878 and 1888 the increase was only 1-100ths per head. It is certainly difficult to reconcile these figures with one's own observation as to the practice of smoking except by assuming that large quantities of tobacco reach the country without having paid duty. As a proof that smoking has increased I may mention the fact of the new institution of smoking concerts constantly given by almost all the political clubs in the Kingdom. I find also that the number of occasional dealers licensed in 1889 was nearly fourfold that in 1879. These facts seem to me to show that the consumption of tobacco is increasing, and is not practically standing still, as would appear from the Statistical Abstract. In conclusion, I would mention that the whole case of the complaints of the outdoor staff was laid before the Ridley Commission and was commented on by the Clerical Head and the Secretary of the Customs Service. The Commissioners reported that they "did not feel themselves in a position to report in detail," and for so declining to report they gave as a reason that

> "It would require much more accurate and technical knowledge than could possibly be at our command, before we could give opinions adverse to those entertained by responsible heads of offices, who are so thoroughly acquainted with the character of the work," &c.

And so the Commission left the question to the Treasury. I would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to devise some machinery for an inquiry being conducted "with more accurate and technical knowledge" than the Commissioners possessed, and by which a thorough and impartial investigation may be made into the whole question. The House is aware that neither the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) nor the present Financial Secretary (Mr. Jackson) is responsible for the pulling to pieces of the Customs machinery in 1882. I fully recognise the difficulty of putting right a huge and complex administrative machine after it was pulled to pieces by 'prentice hands eight years ago, and after it has been tinkered with ever since. I recognise also that the cry for economy in this House involves cheeseparing in the lower grades of Departments. I am fully alive to the fact that there are inherent evils and dangers to the administration of the Services by the modern system of multitudinous Commissions and Inquiries, which are often at cross purposes with each other. I apprehend that the ever-increasing demands on the time and attention of Ministers by the continually accumulating power of Parliamentary talk, is really shifting the practical duties of administration from their hands to those of permanent clerical officials, who in theory are their subordinates. It appears to me that as the time and attention of Ministers is more and more absorbed by this House than by the Departments over which they preside, so must the permanent clerical officials transfer to themselves more and more of the administrative functions of Ministers. For the grave evils I have ventured to bring before the House I blame not men but the modern system, and I bring forward my Motion on the ground of its importance, and because I am persuaded of its public necessity.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

> "In the interests of the Revenue and the commercial and shipping transactions of the United Kingdom, it is expedient that special inquiry should be made into the organisation of the Customs Department, particularly as regards the position, the hours, and the overtime of the outdoor officers, upon which subjects the Royal Commissioners on Civil Establishments were unable to report, and therefore remitted to the Treasury to deal with,"—(*Sir John Colomb*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

(5.35.) Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): In rising to second the Amendment moved by the hon. and gallant Gentleman, I wish to say I am placed in an exceedingly difficult position by the concluding words of his speech. If I fancied anything I was likely to say in support of the Amendment tended in any way against the policy of economy which I understand both Front Benches practically concur in, I should be extremely loth to occupy the time of the House. But there is economy and economy, and if the case presented with so much detail by the hon. and gallant Member has anything in it, as I think it has, a ground for inquiry has been made out. It is true that many evils necessarily result from raising discussions in this House upon the administration of the various Departments; but I think that is an evil inherent in our system of Parliamentary Government, and it is no use deploring it at the present moment. Ministers are under the control of Parliament, to some extent at any rate, and evils in the Departments should be brought before the House in order that Parliament may understand what it is giving Ministers money for. *Primâ facie* I would suggest that, if there were no such grounds presented as have been presented in support of this proposal, the fact that general inquiries have been deemed necessary by Royal Commissions in the other Departments would involve the possibility that such an inquiry might be necessary here. If it be true that, coupled with the reduction of the Customs staff, from various parts of the coasts and creeks smuggling has increased, some inquiry is necessary. I see the Chancellor of the Exchequer contradicts that, and I am sure his means of information are more complete than can possibly be those at my disposal; but then we have before us the fact that there has been no increase of revenue proportionate to the increase of population. I see the Secretary to the Treasury says I am wrong in that. I know there is nothing more deceptive than a mass of figures; but I am bound to say it seems to me to be the case at the moment that there has not been the increase of revenue from tobacco and spirits which one would expect in view of the increase of population. Of course, if this was due to the greater sobriety of the people—and I believe the masses of the working-classes are growing more sober year by year—it would be a matter of congratulation. But the statement made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman seems to show that there has been an increase of smuggling all round, and the increase in seizures and convictions seems to show that a business of no inconsiderable extent is carried on. Certainly I think some inquiry should be made into the hon. and gallant Gentleman's allegations. Since the Playfair inquiry, in 1875, the conditions under which these Civil servants work have not been inquired into. This evening, in reply to a question I put to him, the Secretary to the Treasury said some of these men are kept at their work continuously for a period of 24 hours.

*The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): No, I did not say that. There is a confusion of terms. I said they were in attendance for duty.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: But they are liable to be called upon at any time during the 24 hours. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman in his happy life ever had the disadvantage of being liable to be called upon in this way. Having been part of my life subject to a command of "guards, turn out," I am bound to say that a man who is liable to be called upon at any time in 24 hours, even if he has convenience for rest, is certainly not in a very enviable position. When we are told that in the case of the *Harpy* cutter no bedding is provided for the men who are on duty, it is quite clear that the authorities think that the men are likely to be called upon so often that the beds would not be much used if they were provided. I do not want to stand between the Government and the Votes they wish to take, and therefore I simply suggest that a *primâ facie* case has been made out by the Mover of the Amendment for some inquiry. The hon. and gallant Gentleman does not ask for a Royal Commission or for an inquiry by the House—forms of inquiry which I expect would not be well received by any one connected with the Department. But surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer might himself undertake some inquiry, or undertake that special attention should be paid to this matter, so that Parliament should see there was no real grievance which was left unredressed. I understand by his manner that the Chancellor of the Exchequer assents to the view I am expressing. If that is so, I am loth to occupy the time of the House longer.

(5.43.) Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): It appears to me that there is one very simple and quite conclusive ground for the Amendment which almost precludes, and certainly does not require, any lengthened discussion. There seems to be no dispute about the fact that there has been an inquiry into the organisation of the Civil Service establishments, and that those who were charged with that inquiry have not been able, from want of time, to undertake an examination into the organisation of the Customs Department. It is, therefore, in point of fact a question of what has been recognised as a public duty, combined with the evidence before us that a portion of that public duty remains unfulfilled. I therefore think the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member is obviously reasonable in the purpose which it contemplates, and I gathered from different indications that the Government are not indisposed to accede to that opinion. It appears to me also that the hon. and gallant Member has exercised a sound discretion in avoiding any endeavour by the terms of his Amendment to limit the action of the Government as to the nature—the precise machinery—of the inquiry they are to make, and I would suggest, if it should appear that there is a general concurrence with regard to the purpose in view, that the hon. and gallant Member should show a further discretion by withdrawing his Amendment on the clear understanding that the Government are to discover for themselves and to state to the House what they deem to be the best machinery of inquiry. I think the hon. and gallant Member will feel—as I myself certainly feel, and strongly feel—that there ought never to be any interference by the House, through any vote or Motion, in a question of the administration of a Public Department, except where a necessity for such interference has arisen. No necessity for such interference can be said to have arisen when the object contemplated by the Amendment is one which Her Majesty's Government admit to be reasonable, and with respect to which they are prepared to provide adequate means for carrying it into effect. Upon that supposition I recommend the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment not to ask the House to come to a vote on the Amendment. I am bound to say I have another reason for wishing that the House should not come to a vote upon the Amendment, and that is that while I commend what seems to me the sound judgment of the Mover of the Amendment in respect to the discretion he allows to the Government, and in respect to the substantial justice of his object, I certainly should not like to be pledged to the general colour and tendency of the speech of the hon. and gallant Member. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) has said that nothing would induce him to second the Amendment if he thought there was anything in it which would be adverse to public economy. Then the hon. Member said "but there is economy and economy." Will he forgive me for saying that that is a remark which I have often heard used in this House? No doubt the hon. Member used it with a good object. The fact is, every one who recommends anything extravagant in this House invariably takes care to have it well understood he does so in the interest of economy. There is good economy and bad economy, such an hon. Member will say, and he is in favour of good economy as opposed to bad economy, and on that account he recommends certain expenditure, having it in his mind to save the money in some other way not yet developed or explained. Such declarations ought to be received with some caution, and I am quite clear that if we go into this inquiry it ought to be undertaken without prejudice and without any general supposition that what is to be arrived at is a foregone conclusion. A considerable point of the Mover's speech was to show that whereas there has been an increase of duty in the Port of London between 1878 and 1888, the increased duty is performed by a diminished number of official persons. I should have thought that *primâ facie* that statement ought to fill the mind of the hon. Member with a lively satisfaction. On the contrary, it is treated by the hon. Member as being a most grave circumstance, requiring a minute and jealous inquiry. Indeed, that part of his speech actually tended to the conclusion that if it could be shown that there was a diminished amount of duty done by an increased number of officials, that circumstance would have filled the hon. Member's mind with satisfaction and joy. I have not the smallest doubt that in the case of the constituents of the hon. Member, as in other cases, a very large amount of public duty is performed by a body of trustworthy servants at moderate remuneration. I do not question that, but I must observe that the case of the Customs Department is peculiar from one very important point of view. There is no other department of the State the duties of which have undergone so extraordinary a revolution in our time—I mean in the sense of simplification and facilities. It is nearly 50 years since, as Vice President of the Board of Trade, I became minutely acquainted with the working of the Customs Department, and it is marvellous to compare its duties at that time with what they are now. A very large proportion of the duties of the Board of Trade at that time consisted in investigating the cases of difficulty which arose, and arose from day to day, under the Customs law, and required incessantly to be made the subject of appeal from the Customs Authorities to the Board of Treasury, which used the Board of Trade as its adviser. What has become of those appeals? The whole subject matter of them has been swept away. The change in our commercial system which has reduced the 1,200 articles of our tariff to something like 12, and which has established as the rule of trade in this country a system of free goods and free entry instead of universal duty, striking every commodity as it approached our shores, and entailing a system of examination, checks and counter-checks, such as are now totally unknown, has happily relieved the department of ninteen-twentieths of its former difficulties. I must say I believe also that the Department has been extremely well administered under its successive heads. Everything I trust that can be established in the nature of a substantive grievance on the part of the hon. and gallant Member's constituents will, I hope, receive a close and careful examination, but I trust this inquiry will not be undertaken with the belief that something must be very wrong indeed, on grounds such as have been laid before the House by the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

*(5.56.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I think it is desirable I should rise at once to state the course which the Government propose to take in regard to this Amendment. The Amendment was introduced in a conciliatory speech by my hon. and gallant Friend, and I may say at once that the Government will meet him precisely in the spirit indicated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who for many years has been endeavouring to reform the administration both of the Customs and of the Inland Revenue, and who is as responsible as any one, and probably

more responsible than any one, for this desirable result—that the revenue in this country, both of the Customs and the Inland Revenue, is collected with less cost to the taxpayer than in any other country in the world. A distinction ought to be drawn between the efficiency of the Service and the position of the officers engaged in that Service. With regard to the officers engaged in the Service, one fact is clear, namely, that rigid good faith must be kept with them, and that they should have no reason to complain that the terms on which they entered the Service have been changed to their detriment. But neither are they entitled to claim that if there is a Service pretty similar to their own, which stands on a different footing, the terms of their own engagement must be altered to their advantage. There is nothing more dangerous than the levelling up of all Departments of the State by a system of comparison of the salaries received in one Department with those received in other Departments. The question is whether the duties of the officers are adequately remunerated. My hon. and gallant Friend supposes they are not adequately paid, but there are now 600 applicants for the Service. I have had sufficient experience of the Civil Service to know that if the Customs officers are levelled up to some particular point, another class will at once wish to be levelled to the same point also. For the Government I can say that they will inquire into every possible real grievance that may exist; but I must deprecate the basis of a general levelling up of salaries advocated by my hon. and gallant Friend. One of the hon. and gallant Gentleman's main grievances was that there has been a certain reduction in the upper part of the Service.

*Sir J. COLOMB: The Outdoor Service.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Well, my point is that whenever any re-organisation or reform takes place involving a diminution of numbers it must be asked, where is the diminution to take place? It will not take place at the bottom of the scale, where the young men are, nor in the middle, because the House naturally and rightly objects to pensioning men in the prime of life. Therefore, the reduction must take place in the upper branches of the Service; and if any such reduction is to be deprecated because it curtails the opportunities for promotion, there will be an end to all reform at once. I have heard the complaint made many times, and I think that it is impossible to recognise that Civil servants have any vested interest in the number of offices in the higher grades of the Service. If the State acknowledges that there is such a vested interest, then there will be an end to all reform. I therefore would beg hon. Members, when complaints are brought to them that promotion is slackened by any scheme of re-organisation, not to lend too ready an ear to that which is claimed as a vested right. I feel strongly on this point, for I regret to see the degree to which the minds of Civil servants have lately been disturbed. No one recognises more than myself the immense merits of the Civil Service. It is a Service of which any nation might be proud. In its honour, integrity, and loyalty it is unapproached; while the loyalty which it ever shows to the Executive Government of whatever Party is one of the most striking features of the Services. There is also another loyalty, and that is a strong feeling of loyalty among the Civil servants to the Departments to which they belong. I fear that this latter sentiment is being injured by the tendency not to think of the special Department, but to treat the Service as one vast Body. If that is done, loyalty to particular Departments will be destroyed, and I am not sure that the public interests will not suffer thereby. As to the proofs which exists that the Service is not efficient——

*Sir J. COLOMB: Sufficient.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I should be very sorry to think that the Customs officers do not believe their services to be efficient, or that there is any slackness as to seizures. I think that the hon. and gallant Gentleman's proofs will entirely break down under examination. But there is no evidence that an increased number of seizures means an increased amount of smuggling. The Customs officers have derived great assistance from the employment of steam launches, and this fact, together with increased vigilance, may account for the greater number of seizures. The hon. and gallant Gentleman suggests that there has been a reduction in the amount per head of the Customs revenue; but he should not be too ready to speak of a reduced consumption of spirits per head. It is rather too soon to do that, and

I am afraid my hon. Friend and the House may have a rude awakening as to any great falling off in the amount of spirits consumed per head. Again, if there has been a reduction it might be due to the increased temperance adopted during the time when wages are not so plentiful. It would not be wise to form any premature conclusions as to the revenue from spirits in a year of increasing prosperity. So far as spirits, then, are concerned, I think my hon. Friend's case has broken down. As to tea, it has been proved conclusively that a reduction in the amount of tea consumed per head is due to the substitution of Indian for China tea, the former being stronger and producing more cups to the pound. My hon. and gallant Friend has not established a conclusive case; but there are points to which the attention of the Government should be directed. I think that there ought to be a rigid examination of all those arrangements which the Customs officers hold to be objectionable; because, even though the officers are wrong, the Government wish to remove the sense of injury. Too much importance cannot be attached to the advisability of having a contented as well as an efficient Service. As to the 24 hours' question, the Government will make it the subject of inquiry how far the convenience of the men and the necessities of the Service can be made to agree. I propose that I myself, if the House will so far confide in me, should undertake to conduct a personal inquiry into the matter. I will enter upon it without any preconceived ideas on one side or the other, and will act simply on the principle that strict justice must be done between the interests of the taxpayers and the demands of the Service, and that the interests of the taxpayers and the contentment of the Service are equally secured.

(6.12.) Mr. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): I desire to express a very earnest hope that the right hon. Gentleman, in the course of his inquiry, will call before him officers from the Outdoor Department as well as from the Indoor Department.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes.

Mr. FULTON: The outdoor officers complain most that they have to do all the work, while the indoor officers and the clerks from the Treasury secure all the plums of the Service. Nearly all the higher offices have been filled in that way, and this, I think, is a distinct grievance under which they believe they are suffering. I have been brought into close contact with many of these officers; I think them a very reasonable body of men; and I know they will be satisfied with such an inquiry as the right hon. Gentleman offers, provided they have an opportunity of placing their grievances before him.

(6.14.) Mr. RALPH NEVILLE (Liverpool, Exchange): I wish to thank the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the promise he has given us, and I am quite certain that it will prove extremely satisfactory to my constituents. In Liverpool I think there has been one great abuse, namely, the appointment of officers of one grade to the active duties of those of a higher grade without any payment of the higher emoluments. Though occasionally unavoidable, it is obvious this practice is easily abused, and one result is that by it you are not keeping faith with a body of public servants who took office in the belief that they would have certain chances of promotion. Ever since I have had the honour to represent Liverpool in this House, outdoor officers have frequently complained to me of the extreme length of the hours imposed on many of them. Some of the men who are employed in watching and in boarding vessels are often on duty for 24 hours at a stretch. It may be true that those duties do not require any great amount of intelligence, but they make great demands on physical strength through lack of shelter, for the men have to be on deck in all weathers, and no adequate provision is made for their rest in the short intervals during which they are off duty. I think the right hon. Gentleman will find that too much is expected of some of these men; and I am glad that they are to be afforded an opportunity of stating their grievances. At the same time, I hope it will be clearly understood that the men are not to suffer in any way for stating what they believe to be their grievances. There is a feeling that men who have brought forward grievances have been treated with harshness, and certainly an inquiry which was set on foot at Liverpool was followed by men being removed to other ports, much to their own disadvantage.

(6.18.) MR. J. R. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer give us an assurance that the inquiry shall extend to the case of the messengers, who believe rightly or wrongly that they have a serious grievance? When the warehousing system was altered in 1882 there were 16 first-class messengers and 20 second-class, and a great majority of the latter entered the Service believing that as vacancies occurred among the first class messengers they would be filled up by men of the second-class. It is true these messengers receive but small salaries. The second-class men get £70 a year, with an annual increment up to £80, while the first-class get £80, with an annual increment up to £90. Their complaint is that now when vacancies occur in the first-class only every alternate one is filled up from the second-class. I hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give this matter his attention. I should also like to know if the inquiry will extend to the case of those who are employed in the Statistical Department? It will surprise the House to learn that out of 120 gentlemen employed in that Department as many as 54 are writers, and, therefore, have only temporary engagements. Mr. Giffen, in referring to these men, expressed a strong opinion that they were called upon to discharge duties which should be fulfilled by persons on the permanent staff; and a former Secretary of Customs pointed out that there was no difference between the work done by these writers and that done by the Lower Division clerks. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will inquire whether it is right and in the public interest that a great portion of the responsible work done by this Department should be done by gentlemen who only hold a temporary position.

(6.24.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I desire to express the genuine satisfaction with which I have heard that a personal investigation is to be made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in whom the Civil Service generally will place confidence. But I do venture to impress on the right hon. Gentleman that it will still be necessary to re-assure a large number of men in the Customs, who are very doubtful whether they can give evidence with safety to themselves, whatever tribunal may be constituted. Some time ago an officer was drowned at Harwich, and at the inquest evidence was given by certain Customs officers as to the number of hours he and others had been on duty. Soon afterwards those who gave this evidence were summarily removed to other ports, which involved the breaking up of their homes. This was done by orders of the Board of Customs. I do not say it was the result of their giving evidence, but it certainly was the sequel; and in the Customs generally there is a strong feeling that that is likely to be the kind of treatment meted out to men who venture to give evidence with regard to matters of internal administration. I have been assured that owing to the long hours and the insufficiency of the staff for certain duties—chiefly water-guarding, landing, and export duty—officers are required to give a record of daily work, which it is impossible for them to perform; and those who have made inquiries for me have said that the statements can be proved if opportunity is afforded. Mr. Horsfall's Committee in 1862 recommended a limitation of the number of hours that men should be employed; and since then the tendency has been to increase rather than diminish them. I do think there should be a searching investigation into these matters.

*(6.28.) SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): During the time I have represented Liverpool in this House I have become cognisant of many grievances of Customs officers. Some of the complaints, no doubt, are perhaps exaggerated, and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer comes to look into them he may find them to be empty grievances. But some of them are, undoubtedly, substantial grievances, and one of these has to do with the matter of promotion. Therefore, the undertaking of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to personally preside over this inquiry will give general satisfaction.

(6.29.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I hope that the inquiry of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will embrace the ports of Ireland, and particularly Belfast, which has witnessed marvellous development, which is now the third port in the United Kingdom, and which probably will compare very favourably with any similar port in respect of the cost at which its revenue is collected. I do, therefore, ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to inquire into the condition of the Customs officials in Ireland, and to give them every facility for laying their case before him.

*(6.30.) Mr. LAFONE (Southwark, Bermondsey): I do not wish to deny that the officers have grievances of which they may complain; but there is also a grievance among merchants, labourers, and others, which arises from the short hours during which outdoor officers are on duty during part of the year. During four months in the year their hours of duty are from nine to four, and thus the waterside labourer was restricted to earning 2s. 11d. a day, under the old wage rate of 5d. per hour. I trust this grievance on the other side will not be forgotten in this inquiry. I do not think there is a single trade in London in which the hours are so short. I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his Committee will take into consideration these extremely short hours during four months in the year during which Customs officials allow the landing and storing of goods. I suggest an extension of hours with increased pay, if necessary, as the present system is a source of great inconvenience and loss to merchants, shipowners, and labourers.

(6.31.) Major BANES (West Ham, S.): I only wish to express the hope that this will not be a merely Departmental inquiry, but that every facility will be afforded for every officer to fully ventilate his grievance. For over 40 years I have had practical experience among them, and I know they have substantial grievances of which they complain. I am quite sure the Chancellor of the Exchequer will appreciate the advantage of having contented servants instead of discontented slaves. There is a growing sense of injustice among the men as year by year they have found their work and responsibilities increase, while they have fewer chances of promotion. I am convinced that if they are allowed to state their case fully the right hon. Gentleman will be inclined to give them redress, and so I hope that full opportunity will be given.

*(6.32.) Mr. MORTON (Peterborough): I have no intention of prolonging the debate; I only wish to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend the inquiry to include the messengers of the Customs Department? I am strongly in favour of economy; but I would not have it practised on the lower salaries ranging from £70 to £100 a year. It is fair, however, that all who have grievances should have them inquired into, although I do not suppose inquiry will settle the matter entirely, for I never yet heard that public officers were ever perfectly satisfied. Of course, however, after fair inquiry, there should be less ground for complaint.

(6.33.) Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I do not represent a river side constituency, but a large number of my constituents are engaged in the Customs Department, and I think that I, in common with all Metropolitan Members, may congratulate the Government on their intention to hold this inquiry. But I would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer not to look with too optimistic a spirit on the fact that there is a large increase in the number of prosecutions for bringing in goods without paying duty. The offence of smuggling seems to have greatly increased, so much so, that recently there were as many as 200 prosecutions at Liverpool, and the goods "run" were chiefly tobacco. Concurrently with this there was a diminution in the staff; and I cannot understand how, with a decreased number of officials, there should be an increase in the number of discoveries of cases of smuggling. I also find that since the staff was decreased several warehouses in Liverpool are not watched while goods are landed, and it is practically left to the honesty of traders to declare that goods are not smuggled. I trust when this investigation takes place the question will be included whether there are a sufficient number of Custom House officials to protect the interests of the Revenue and the taxpayers.

*(6.35.) Mr. GOSCHEN: With the indulgence of the House I will answer the questions that have been put to me. Certainly Irish officials will have the same opportunity as other classes of having their complaints inquired into.

As to the character of the inquiry, and the suggestion that it shall not be Departmental, I can only describe it as one in which I shall sit as a Judge; and I shall have the assistance of my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury, and men with practical acquaintance of the matters under investigation and impartial judgment. But I must say, in answer to the hon. Member opposite, that the inquiry will be confined to the class mentioned by my hon. and gallant Friend. It would be impossible for me to extend the inquiry into all the other branches of the Service, and upon this particular Service inquiry was recommended by the Commission, and this is one of the grounds upon which I undertake it. These, I think, were the main questions asked. I am glad that the House is satisfied with the undertaking I have given; but may I venture to express a hope that Members will not too much encourage communication between members of the Civil Service and politicians in relation to the conditions of service, for it has a tendency to undermine proper discipline in the Service.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): May I inquire whether inquiry will be directed into the allegations as to the insanitary conditions of work said to prevail in certain classes of the Service?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I presume that will fall within the scope of the inquiry.

*Mr. MORTON: And in reference to my question as to messengers.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: It is not contemplated that these should be included in the inquiry. I may say that there are no posts in the Service for which there are so many applications, which seems to indicate the conditions are not very unsatisfactory.

(6.40.) Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question again proposed.

ALLEGED MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE—CASE OF GATCLIFFE.

*(6.40.) Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I take this opportunity to call attention to a grave miscarriage of justice. It is a matter upon which the Home Secretary has been questioned, but his answers have been altogether unsatisfactory. I refer to the circumstances under which a prisoner named Gatcliffe met with his death while confined in Strangeways Prison, Manchester. The facts of the case are briefly these: Gatcliffe was committed for 21 days for a comparatively venial offence, being drunk and disorderly. He was removed to Strangeways Gaol on November 20, and was at the time found to be suffering from *delirium tremens*, and was at once admitted to the hospital, being lodged in what is called the "Association" room, where at the time there were six or eight prisoners confined. He was there subjected to the usual examination by the assistant surgeon of the prison, and at that time, it is important to observe, the surgeon has stated upon oath there were no external marks of violence upon his body. He was repeatedly seen by the surgeon, and I mention particularly that he was seen by the surgeon on Friday the 22nd, when he presented no unfavourable symptoms. The surgeon next saw him at half-past 9 on the Saturday morning, when he was suffering from severe injuries, was in fact dying, and actually died half an hour afterwards, and the medical evidence is that he died in consequence of certain injuries which the *post-mortem* examination disclosed. To give a brief summary of the injuries, his breast bone was broken, besides four ribs on one side of the body and two ribs on the other were fractured, one of the ribs being fractured in two distinct places; and, in addition, there were more than a dozen contusions and bruises on chest, arms, and thighs. The *post-mortem* examination was in accordance with statute made by a surgeon, not an official of the prison (Dr. Kitchen); and from Dr. Kitchen we have it in evidence that, in his opinion, the fractures could not have been self-inflicted, and that some of the fractures and bruises must have been caused by the fist of another person. Dr. Kitchen did not stand alone in this evidence—he was generally corroborated by Dr. Paton, the assistant surgeon of Strangeways Prison. Then came the question, how were the injuries sustained? I mentioned just now that the prisoner was seen by the surgeon, and seemed to be going on well on Friday, 22nd; therefore, it is clear that the injuries, however they arose, were sustained between that time and half-past 9 on Saturday morning. The warder in charge of the association room

on that night, a warder named Mitchell, was placed on trial for the manslaughter of Gatcliffe; and against him there was the direct evidence of three prisoners in the room that during the night they saw Mitchell repeatedly strike Gatcliffe with his fist, Gatcliffe being at the time tied down to his bed. These prisoners were asked why they did not ring the bell, or give an alarm, and they replied they were too much afraid to do that, for if they had done so they would have been charged with mutiny, and have got into serious trouble for committing a breach of discipline. Of course, I am not in any way desirous of re-trying the case in the House of Commons, and I will not refer to the trial except so far as the result of it fixes responsibility upon the Prison Commissioners, and, through them, upon the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. The jury rejected altogether the evidence of the three prisoners. Well, for my own part, I do not think their story incredible, or even improbable, and I base my opinion on a very weighty document. Here I have the Report of the Penal Servitude Acts Commission, in which the Commissioners draw attention to the evidence given before them by the Governor of Chatham Prison to the effect that he would never take prisoners' evidence against a warder, that he had always shown prisoners that he takes the warder's part; that even if he disapproved of the conduct of a warder he would not let a prisoner know it; that the word of a warder is decisive in every case; that when a man becomes a convict he is necessarily placed in such a position that under no conceivable circumstances is his word to be preferred to that of a free man; that, in fact, it is of very little use practically a prisoner making a complaint. The Commissioners add, "the Governor of Chatham Prison is an upright, careful officer." Well, my only observation is that when an officer takes such a distorted, extravagant view of his position this character is all the more dangerous. There were two theories set up on the part of the defence, one being that the prisoner Gatcliffe was delirious, and that he injured himself tumbling about. Now, I submit this theory is completely upset if one considers the position of the injuries upon the body of the prisoner. There were no injuries whatever upon the head and face, or on the back part of the body; all the injuries were upon the chest, arms, and thighs. I rely a good deal upon this fact, because I think it will be obvious that if you suppose a delirious patient injuring himself by tumbling about it will be almost inevitable that the extremities of the body, and the head and face particularly, that will sustain injury; whereas, in this case, not a scratch appeared on the extremities of the body; all these terrible injuries were in the front part and near the middle of the body. Another theory for the defence was that the injuries had been sustained in the course of putting a strait jacket upon Gatcliffe, and his struggles against this. This theory is altogether untenable, having regard to the medical testimony, not only of Dr. Kitchen, but of Dr. Paton, the prison surgeon; and when one considers the character, extent, and number of these terrible injuries I submit to the right hon. Gentleman that even if we accept this theory we cannot escape the conclusion that reckless criminal violence was applied to the person of the prisoner, and, therefore, that manslaughter was actually committed, although, of course, there might be some change in the precise legal aspect of the offence. How does the matter stand so far as the responsibility of the Prison Commissioners is concerned? I submit with the utmost confidence that upon the evidence we must conclude one thing, at all events, that the injuries to Gatcliffe were not self-inflicted. and the conclusion is irresistible that in that association room which was occupied at the time by some eight prisoners, criminal and brutal violence was applied to the body of Gatcliffe, and, as a result, he died. Warder Mitchell has been acquitted. Of course, I accept the verdict of the jury as to Mitchell's innocence, but who then, I ask, is the guilty person who committed this offence in the room while eight persons were present? That is the question to which the public have a right to insist upon an answer. Are the Commissioners content that it should be possible to do a man to death by brutal violence in this way, and no one shall be brought to justice? If so, is the Home Secretary content? I am bound to say, with all respect, that if the right hon. Gentleman does not control his Commissioners with a firmer hand they will bring him into very grave discredit with the country. What has been done in the matter? The Home Secretary has informed us that there has been an inquiry, a secret inquiry, so far as the public are concerned, conducted by Captain Wilson. But who is Captain Wilson? He is either a Commissioner or an Inspector, or one of the servants of the Board; so you have actually one of the officers of the Board, whose administration is called in question, appointed to investigate the circumstances of this case. I venture to think that the public would have felt more satisfied if the Visiting Justices of the Prison had been requested to hold the inquiry. In the case of Daly, in Chatham Prison, the Visiting Justices were asked to conduct the necessary inquiry, and I cannot see why, except, indeed, for the purpose of sheltering the Prison Commissioners, a similar course was not taken in this case. Well, Captain Wilson, at all events, has conducted the investigation, and certain results have followed. I understand that Chapman, the hospital warder, has been dismissed. I shall be glad to know if this is so, and, if so, why was he dismissed? I understand, also, that Dr. Braddell, the chief medical officer, who has performed excellent service for 23 years, has been served with three months' notice to leave, and if that is so, I should like to know why? The Home Secretary has told us that two other officers of the prison have been dismissed, and perhaps he will be good enough to tell us why this is the case. Apparently the only person who has escaped with absolute impunity is the Governor of the prison, but if there has been so lax an administration as that in the course of this inquiry, no less than four officials have been summarily dismissed, how is it that the person chiefly responsible for the administration and discipline of the prison, Major Preston, has been allowed to escape censure? I am informed, upon what I believe to be excellent authority, that an order has been given that in future all cases of prisoners suffering from *delirium tremens* shall be treated in the body of the prison, under the care of two or more prisoners. If that be so, I certainly protest most strongly against any such order being carried out. The Prison Commissioners are not without experience of the fatal results following such an arrangement. I presume the right hon. Gentleman has not forgotten the painful and fatal occurrence which happened at Armley Gaol in March, 1888, when a certificated lunatic was placed in a cell under the care of two prisoners, and, during the night, one of those prisoners was killed by the lunatic. I only mention this because it shows that the Prison Commissioners have had experience of the fatal results which follow mischievous arrangements of this character. Now, this case, so far as the Commissioners are concerned, comes upon the top of many recent cases which have caused very great disquietude in the minds of all who are interested in the administration of our English prisons, and there are one or two of those cases to which I think it necessary to allude. It is only a few months since I drew attention in this House to an occurrence in Ipswich Gaol. In a civil action brought against the Governor of that prison the plaintiff recovered damages to the amount of £75, on the ground that he, being an unconvicted prisoner, was put in prison clothes and forced to enter the bath against his will. The *gravamen* of the complaint in that case lies in the fact that it was proved that for 10 years there had been in operation in that gaol a set of rules that were absolutely contrary to the law. Only a month or two ago a much stronger case occurred, and the late Governor of Northampton Gaol is now suffering 10 years' penal servitude for attempting a criminal operation on a pregnant woman, that pregnant woman being the matron of the female side of the prison of which he was the chief officer. That was a scandal of the very grossest kind, and is proof that the supervision exercised by the Prison Commissioners is not what it ought to be. Now, Sir, I have just a word to say with regard to Daly's case. I am aware that that case is still *sub judice*, but it is admitted on both sides that Daly, a prisoner in Chatham Gaol, was poisoned not once, but on several occasions, by the wrongful administration of belladonna, which is sufficient evidence that there was very considerable laxity in the administration of that prison. Let me take another case. I refer to one that occurred in Birmingham Gaol last year. The Visiting Justices of that prison reported to the Borough Justices that the bread served out in the gaol was unfit for human food and that the health of the prisoners who had eaten it had thereby become impaired. Of course, one is glad that the Visiting Justices discovered this, and drew public attention to it, but surely it was not the business of the Visiting Justices to find out an impropriety of such a character. It ought to have been discovered by the officers of the prison long before. There is another case to which I will briefly call attention. It is one which occurred inside Millbank Prison in January last—only two months ago; in that case an inquest was held on the body of Joseph Honeysett, who was seriously injured there during the month of December, so much injured that he died in consequence. It is true, I believe, that the prisoner stated that he fell down in his cell, but, according to the evidence given by his mother at the inquest, he had had to undergo a regular fight to get into the Infirmary. The Coroner naturally inquired for the prison doctor, but that person was not forthcoming. I presume they have more than one prison doctor in that gaol, but it was said that the doctor was ill and there was no one to represent him. A juror said—

> "Mr. Coroner, I am afraid we shall not get at the bottom of this now, for the case is most unsatisfactory.'

And a witness said—

> "It is a strange thing that the deceased should have been in prison for five or six months, and the authorities there should know nothing of it."

I think that the remark made by the Coroner is worthy of the attention of the right hon. Gentleman, for he said—

> "It is idle to hold inquiries if the information is withheld from us."

Now, this exactly touches what I believe to be the real source of the mischief. The Prison Commissioners have adopted a policy of hushing up everything that may in any way bring discredit on the administration, and consequently on themselves. For my part, I do not hesitate to say that this policy of excessive secrecy leads, and always will lead, to abuses and scandals, because it affords the most effective cover for bad and unscrupulous persons. I do not wish to do any injustice to the prison service of this country. It is clear that in every service there must be a certain proportion of bad and untrustworthy men, and this remark, I think, applies with exceptional force to the prison service, where the duties are of a singularly unpleasant and repulsive character, and where the officers of every grade are constantly brought into contact with the seamy side of human nature. It is only by publicity, and by meting out punishment where power has been abused, that you can hope to make the prison service of this country what it ought to be. In conclusion, I have only to say that in the case of the prisoner Gatliffe there has been, in my judgment, a serious miscarriage of justice, and that if the matter is left where it is you will have taught a bad lesson to unscrupulous men in the prison service, namely, that they may be guilty of brutal ill-treatment towards helpless creatures placed under their charge, and the Prison Commissioners will do their best to hush up the matter, and thus secure for them practical immunity. I think it is high time that a protest should be made against the policy which distinguishes the present Prisons Board. I have felt it my duty to make this protest to-night, and I trust that, in doing so, I shall have, at any rate in some degree, the support of this House.

*(7.10.) SIR R. N. FOWLER (London, City): I only desire to say a few words upon this matter to which my attention was called a few weeks ago. I refer to the Manchester case which I looked into with some care. I was not, however, aware that it would be brought up to-day, or I should have been better prepared to have discussed it. Nevertheless, I may say that it struck me as being a case which we can hardly be called upon to decide in this House, because it has already been considered by a jury whose verdict ought to prevent our going into the matter. All I wish to do at the present moment is to point out that several of the officials of the prison have been dismissed by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, which is a proof that he has had the matter under his careful consideration. Representations were made to the Home Office, and the case was thoroughly investigated by my

right hon. Friend, and from the fact that he has dismissed a number of the prison officials it is evident that he was not satisfied with the result, and that he is disposed to take a strenuous line in the discharge of his duty.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I do not think it is at all surprising, after the cases that have been brought before this House in reference to the treatment of prisoners in Irish gaols, that an English Member should have thought proper to bring forward the question which is now before the House. The experience we have had in Ireland, where the question of prison treatment has long been a burning question, has had the effect of throwing a little light on what appears to be going on in England. And I am glad that the prison discipline of this country is now beginning to attract the intention of English Members. I do not think you could have a better instance of this than the fact that the hon. Baronet who has just addressed the House, and who, when Irish cases have been brought before us, has habitually treated them with contempt, and invariably given his Vote for the Government, has at last found it necessary to bestow some attention on an English case. Now that the question has reached a stage in which it has secured the attention of British Legislatures, there can be little doubt that before long the necessary reforms in regard to prison treatment will be brought about. I read in one of the London papers, published on Saturday last, an account of an interview with a man who had recently been released from Chatham Prison, and, in the course of his statements, the man preferred very serious charges against the officers of more than one gaol. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will be able to say, in the reply he will presently make, whether there is any ground for those charges, and what course he intends to take with regard to the officers who are implicated. This man alleges that while he was in Chatham Prison, he was very badly treated. He says:—

> "Four times I was punished by solitary confinement in a solitary cell, and on every one of those occasions the punishment was unjustly given. They charged me with not returning to work when I was not able to work through my ill-health, and they charged me with talking when I was not. I cannot describe the terrors of those cells. The smell in them is horrible, and they are so cold, while the light is altogether insufficient. Whenever I came out of them after confinement, I felt like a drunken man on regaining a better atmosphere; but if the change made me reel, as it did once or twice, I only got a clump on the head."

This is a strong charge against some officer in the gaol, and I think it is one that ought to be inquired into. I am not going to accept the bare statement of any prisoner, but I know, from my own experience of prisoners in Ireland, that cruelties are perpetrated of which no one ever hears in consequence of that sort of freemasonry which is known to exist among the prison officials. This man, whose name is Harrison, was removed from Chatham to Millbank, and he states:—

> "I saw the dynamitards there and they complained bitterly of their penal cells. The two who were last convicted—Gallagher and Hawkins—are only allowed a quarter-of-an-hour's exercise daily instead of an hour, and they feel the deprivation keenly. Our food consisted of skilly, soup, potatoes, bread, and sometimes meat, but it was very tough and gristly meat, strongly reminding one of cat's food. The food and general treatment of prisoners has been so bad that several cases of insubordination occurred. I will give an instance of some of the treatment. There was one man in a dying condition over whom a pail of water was thrown as a remedy, with the result that he had to be removed to the infirmary and his parents sent for, so critical became his condition. But he eventually recovered."

Here we have complaints of the quality of the food and the condition of the cells, and we are told that several cases of insubordination had occurred. This is what might be expected under the circumstances, as it very seldom happens in well-conducted prisons that revolts take place. Harrison goes on to say—

> "On another occasion, in the cell next to mine, I heard two officers go in and beat a prisoner unmercifully with their staves. It was something terrible, for I could hear it was his poor head they were hitting. I have not seen him since. He is either in the Infirmary or dead. I stopped in my cell about two hours after that, but I never heard him move, and I determined to let the world know of it when I got out. I believe a special inquiry has been held recently into the charges alleged by prisoners, but what has been done, or whether anything has been done, I cannot say."

That was a case which occurred in Millbank, and I think it is one deserving investigation by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. Harrison also makes charges against the chaplain which I hope are not true, for a prisoner has the right to look to the chaplain for encouragement and sympathy. One chaplain said to him, "You are like the rest of them that want to turn the world upside down," and did not give him encouragement; whereas at Wormwood Scrubbs the chaplain advised him that if he observed the rules, and conducted himself well, he might get out of prison before the completion of his term. There you have the contrast between the sympathetic chaplain who does his duty, and advises the prisoner to observe the rules and to regain his liberty, and the chaplain who offers no word of consolation, but, priding himself on being an old, true-blue Tory type of man, permits himself to carry his political opinions into the gaol, to the irritation of political prisoners, with whose political sentiments I have yet to learn that the rules allow interference on the part of the chaplain. The same man says that he was three months at Chatham without having received a visit from the chaplain at all. The chaplain, as soon as the prisoner is classed, ought to be the first to go and see him, and when he does go it ought to be to console and encourage, and not to gibe. If Mr. Harrison's statement is true, not only did the chaplain at Chatham annoy him, but he neglected a plain duty, which was to have gone and seen the prisoner as soon as he was passed. It rests with the prisoner himself, as soon as he is passed, to say to what denomination he belongs. As soon as he does that a card is put upon his door, and it is the business of the chaplain to see him as soon as possible. If this chaplain has failed to do his duty, I hope he will be called to order for his misconduct. If you cannot make him fulfil his duty in this prison of Chatham, which the criminal classes recognise as a hell upon earth, at least you can get some other clergyman who will realise the responsibility of his office. I think experience shows that a case has been made out for impartial and thorough investigation into the prison system. It should be seen that men who find themselves in prison, often as much from their misfortunes as their faults, are not worried and interfered with, but are treated as kindly as possible. I hope the Home Secretary will see the advisability of having some Commission to inquire into the various charges which arise all over England; and if the right hon. Gentleman has not the information now, I trust he will be able to give us some information to-morrow, as to the allegations respecting Millbank Prison.

(7.25.) DR. TANNER: Sir, before the right hon. Gentleman replies, I take this opportunity of emphasising the remarks made by my hon. Friend. It was only last Friday that I addressed a question to the right hon. Gentleman on the subject, and it is really most extraordinary that Her Majesty's Government have done nothing in this case. I cannot understand how the right hon. Gentleman can feel satisfied himself with the answers which he gives on the information supplied to him, and I believe that if he made thorough examination into the matter he would not remain satisfied. I asked him about the Warder Mitchell, who assaulted another delirious prisoner; and if you find such a case of gross inhumanity as to insult a poor man who was suffering from delirium, I think it ought to be inquired into, and matters not allowed to remain as they now are. The right hon. Gentleman was not perfectly certain whether Mitchell would or would not be present.

MR. MATTHEWS: I did not say so.

DR. TANNER: I did not understand that at the time. But it shows the great use of pressing these questions, for each time we get more definite information. I know that the right hon. Gentleman is proverbially courteous in this House, and I acknowledge courtesy whenever I meet with it. Will the right hon. Gentleman take into consideration the suggestion of the Inspector, Captain Wilson, whose counsels, from his official position, certainly carry weight? I think the country requires an answer, and I hope the Government will be able to clear themselves from the charge of sheltering people guilty of inhumanity of the worst possible character. I should also like to have some information as to the prisoner Daly, for, as a medical man, I cannot understand how it came to pass that a medicine like belladonna, which is a strong poison, was administered in such large doses as appears to have been the case. It appears to me that there must have been something radically wrong in the treatment of Daly. If there is such laxity in regard to the dispensing of medicines in Her Majesty's prisons it is easy to stretch matters still further, and have prisoners actually killed with other piosons. I think the circumstances of this case should be thoroughly inquired into.

(7.33.) MR. MATTHEWS: I cannot complain of hon. Members raising questions of this kind as to the conduct of prison officials, as I believe that nothing is more calculated to keep these officials up to the mark than the application to them of this constant watchfulness on the part of hon. Members. I think it best not to enter into the case of the man Daly in any detail, as the case is still under investigation by the Visitors of the prison, whose Report, I hope, will be full and searching. I beg to postpone any observations I may have to make upon the case until the Report comes in. This much I may say, however, that I have allowed the Visitors an absolutely free hand, having left them to pursue their investigation without the slightest control on my part. There can be no doubt that the task of the prison warders is not an easy one, from the very nature of their duties, for they are constantly being provoked and irritated by prisoners who resist prison discipline as much as they can, and I do not say this to censure such prisoners, as it is very natural on their part to resist so far as they can. The duty of the warders is disagreeable, and necessarily disagreeable, and there is no doubt that the men are constantly in a state of irritation, and that being so, it is necessary that the Prison Authorities should keep a watchful eye upon them to see that the great power which, from the very necessity of the case, is exercised by them is not marked by cruelty. When the hon. Member for Bethnal Green, however, makes the case at Strangeways Gaol illustrative of the charge that the Prison Commissioners shrink from inquiry and try to hush up these matters, it appears to me that the accusation is utterly unwarranted by the facts. What did the Commissioners do? I hold in my hand an enormous mass of evidence collected by them. This shows that they held a most careful inquiry in the hospital ward to find out the real facts of the case; and, as the result of their investigation, the man Mitchell was put on his trial. That, surely, was not trying to hush the matter up, or an endeavour to cloak the guilt of a warder!

*MR. PICKERSGILL: Their hands were forced by the verdict of manslaughter returned by the Coroner's Jury.

MR. MATTHEWS: I would point out that before that verdict was returned the prison officials had inquired into the circumstances attending Gatcliffe's death, and the matter had been put into the hands of the public prosecutor. The hon. Member felt—and, of course, I feel still more—embarrassed by the verdict of the jury, but the hon. Member must not make that verdict the foundation for charges against the Prison Commissioners, who were not responsible for the result of the trial. It is not proper that I should comment on what the jury thought fit to find or on what the Judge thought fit to say. The hon. Member has, with some force, put before the House the points which operated on my mind in considering this case. I considered the case over and over again to see if there was any other direction in which an inquiry could take place, but the evidence of the doctors who attended the man Gatcliffe from half past 5 to 6 o'clock on the evening of the 22nd November—that was the evening before his death—was conclusive that when they then examined the deceased the injuries of which he ultimately died were not visible. The Prison Commissioners endeavoured, as far as they could, to ascertain all that had taken place on the 22nd November. I hope I shall not be accused of neglecting to say everything that might be said, but when dealing with the case of men over whose heads accusations are hanging, though it is necessary to say something, I cannot go further than that the most careful investigation has failed to bring forth any *primâ facie* evidence on which a charge of undue violence can be brought against any other person. Under the circumstances what other public inquiry is possible? If I could have seen a *primâ facie* case of misconduct against any other person, that case would certainly have been brought forward. It was not my fault, still less that of the Prison Commissioners, that no one has been convicted. The Prison Commissioners displayed the utmost zeal in the case. The greater part of the mass of papers I hold in my hand is made up of Reports by the Commissioners, and they have certainly done their best to investigate the case, as well as to find out the history of Gatcliffe, the time his drinking habits began, and all other circumstances connected with him down to the time of his death. Chapman was the hospital warder in charge of the room—it was not an association room, but a hospital ward, and Gatcliffe was put into it because he had incipient *delirium tremens.* Two other persons in the ward, Dukes—who has since been executed—and Chadwick were examined over and over again by the Prison Commissioners. They were put into that ward because it was thought that both men might commit suicide if they were not watched. The conclusion of the Prison Commissioners was that Chapman was responsible for an undoubted irregularity—namely, putting on a strait waistcoat twice in the course of the 21st of November upon Gatcliffe, without the positive instruction of the medical officer, which was the rule of the prison. Chapman has been dismissed, and neither he nor Mitchell, the warder, will again be employed in the Prison Service. Of the personal medical qualities of Dr. Braddon I cannot speak too highly. He is a man of very great eminence, a man of perfect humanity, and I desire to say not a word in the way of censure on Dr. Braddon. The Prison Commissioners felt, however, that Dr. Braddon was not able to give that undivided attention to the medical care of the prisoners that was desirable. He was a gentleman who came in under the Act of 1887, and he was allowed to continue his private practice and to pay only occasional visits to the prison during the course of the day. It appeared to me and to the Commissioners that this case showed that a closer and more concentrated attention on the part of the chief medical officer was desirable. Therefore, we determined to substitute a permanent medical officer in the place of Dr. Braddon, and we hope that change will conduce to the satisfactory medical treatment of the prisoners. One other officer has been dismissed, Rappley, the day warder, who was in charge during the hours of daylight both on the 21st and the 22nd November. Rappley, with the assistance of two of the prisoners in the room, put a strait waistcoat on Gatcliffe on two occasions on the day of the 23rd. Rappley's excuse was that he was carrying out the course of practice which he had known to be made use of before when patients were noisy, and Gatcliffe was undoubtedly noisy and mischievous. Hon. Members compel me to say that after the acquittal I did look round to see whether anyone else was responsible. I am, however, bound to say that, after making the utmost inquiry into all the circumstances of the unfortunate affair, I have been unable to discover even a *primâ facie* case against Rappley, and the testimony of the medical men, which goes up to the final circumstances in the case, certainly acquit him of any blame in connection with the man's death. I must say, at the same time, I cannot agree with Rappley's conduct after the event. I believe there was a deficiency of straightforwardness in his account of the blows inflicted by Mitchell and others in the ward, and he has been discharged from further service in the prison. The Governor of the prison has not escaped. I believe it will not be denied that he is a most humane man, thoroughly desirous of doing his duty towards the prisoners under his charge. I believe the Governor has the respect and goodwill of all the magistrates who commit prisoners to his keeping, and I believe that will be found to be the feeling entertained towards him in the locality generally. At the same time I thought it right to direct that that gentleman should be severely reprimanded for what I consider a want of sufficient supervision. I have stated that in the House already, in answer to the many questions which have been addressed to me. I do not mean to say that the Governor was responsible for the ultimate injuries sustained by Gatcliffe, but there was a deficiency of supervision in regard to the strait waistcoat. It was in a place where it ought not to have been, namely, under one of the beds in the ward. It ought to have been in safe custody, where it could not have been got at without the knowledge of higher officials than the warders. The Governor, however, was not responsible for the character of Mitchell, who was employed as a hospital warder. He was always regarded as a quiet and kindly-disposed man. He was formerly a colour-sergeant in the Army, and had testimonials of the highest kind. I cannot agree with the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Pickersgill) that cases of violence to prisoners are on the increase. When we look at the extent and character of our prison system we must be prepared to find cases of misconduct on the part of warders now and then; but I think, under all the circumstances, the hon. Member will find that the number of such instances is extremely small. As regards what has been said by the hon. Member in reference to the Visiting Commissioners I must also disagree. I regard the Commissioners as a most admirable Body. The Visitors display commendable watchfulness and control in these matters, and spare no effort to check any abuse of power either on the part of a warder or a Governor of a prison. I am convinced that they discharge the duty devolving upon them conscientiously and well. I do not know that any better system could be substituted for that which is at present in force in this respect. It is the duty of the Visitors to visit every prisoner, and if any complaint is made as to the maltreatment of a prisoner it is the duty of the Visitor to investigate the complaint, and to bring any official before him for the purpose of enabling him to arrive at the facts of the case. I cannot conceive any better system of discovering and punishing cases of maltreatment. I am not going to say that any warder or any Governor is not liable to make mistakes, but I do say this much, that the hon. Member who introduced this matter has not brought forward the slightest foundation to support the charge that the Prison Commissioners in this case neglected to discharge their responsible duties. My experience of them is that they do their utmost to prevent any undue exercise of the powers entrusted to prison officials.

(7.55.) Mr. COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I would impress upon the right hon. Gentleman the importance of thoroughly probing each case that comes to the front, so as to carry out the spirit of the law which has made the punishment inflicted less vindictive than it used to be. I think the punishment of imprisonment is quite enough to inflict on any man without adding to it by treating the prisoner vindictively. All vindictive punishment tends to harden prisoners. Our object should be to lead them into the paths of virtue rather than to drive them back into the paths of vice. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has given so much personal attention to this matter, and I hope that all cases of the kind will receive his personal investigation.

GOVERNMENT FURNITURE CONTRACTS.

(7.57.) Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I should like to ask the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) a question I have already addressed to him on two or three occasions in regard to the system of supplying the Government with furniture. I think that last year the right hon. Gentleman promised that the contracts for the supply of furniture in Government offices should be thrown open instead of being left in the hands of two or three privileged firms in the Metropolis. I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether that promise has been redeemed? I feel under deep obligations to the right hon. Gentleman for having kept the promise he made to me two years ago in regard to Kew Gardens. I pressed on the right hon. Gentleman, two or three years ago, the necessity of providing light refreshments to the public who frequent Kew Gardens. I am glad to say he took the hint, and has provided an admirable establishment of the kind in the gardens. I wish now to ask him who it is who provides the seats in our public gardens, and what becomes of the revenue derived from the letting of such seats?

*(8.0.) The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, Dublin University): As to the hon. Member's first question the pledge I gave last year was that the name of any respectable firm which was sent to the Office of Works should be put on the list of those invited to tender. I now repeat that pledge; some additional names have since then, I believe, been put on the list, and if the hon. Member will submit to me the names of other firms I shall be glad to add them to the list. As to the chairs in the parks the money received from letting them is regarded

as extra receipts, and paid into the Exchequer.

Mr. CREMER: Will the right hon. Gentleman have any objection to inserting advertisements in the ordinary newspapers for tenders for furniture contracts?

*Mr. PLUNKET: One objection is that we have found by experience that if that system be adopted tenders are received from a number of firms that we know never will be able to carry out the contract.

Mr. MORTON: I should like to impress on the right hon. Gentleman the fact that he ought to advertise for tenders of this sort. It is well-known that the system of asking tenders from certain firms does not enable you to get fair tenders. I know, in connection with my own business, that very often arrangements are made between the various parties, and the tenders are sent in accordingly. A few years ago it could be told with almost dead certainty who were to get certain tenders, simply because an arrangement was made between the people on the list. Until you get independent persons to tender in the ordinary way you cannot get a fair system of tenders.

Question put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1890-91.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class I.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £31,725, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for Expenditure in respect of Royal Palaces and Marlborough House."

(8.7.) Mr. A. O'CONNOR: This being the first Vote of the Civil Service Estimates, I desire to ask a question, which has reference not only to this particular Vote, but to a number of other Votes in different Classes. The Vote which has just been put from the Chair includes the Royal Palaces, which previously were dealt with in a separate Vote, and also Marlborough House, which was also treated separately. The Government propose in this case, as in a great many others, to take a lump sum for a number of different Services. It seems to me that a Department which obtains this complex Vote will be in the position of having a very much larger balance probably than it had before. It may have a balance on a single Vote equal to what would have been the balances on the two combined Votes in previous years. That will give them a very much freer hand than they ever had before, and will diminish *pro tanto* the Parliamentary check over the Estimates. I wish to know whether the Government propose to treat this lump sum as a single Vote belonging to the entire Service, or whether they will be compelled to surrender any unexpended balance on the several items? If, for instance, they have an unexpended balance on the Royal Palaces Account, will they be compelled to pay that into the Exchequer, or will they be at liberty to expend it on Marlborough House?

*(8.11.) Mr. JACKSON: My right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury said, on a previous occasion, that it was the intention of the Government to take the opinion of the Public Accounts Committee as to what steps should be taken as regards the balances—whether the items under each sub-head should be treated as separate Votes and the unexpended balance be repaid into the Exchequer, or whether the balances should be available to be transferred from one sub-head to another. There are obvious advantages in there being the power of transfer, but the Government have no desire to act in any way contrary to the opinion of the House and of the Public Accounts Committee. The continued control of Parliament may be secured in one of two ways. One plan is that the Comptroller and Auditor General should report, in his Annual Report, any case in which one of the sub-heads has been exceeded. The rolling of the Votes into one was not suggested with any desire or view to obtain a larger power of transfer than at present is possessed, but there are advantages in putting two or three Votes of a like character together. As the Committee knows, the margin necessary to avoid Supplementary Estimates is increased in degree and in extent according as the Votes are numerous, and no doubt a

reasonable consolidation of Votes with the power of making a transfer of balance arising on one sub-head to defray a deficit arising in another sub-head does tend, and will tend, to diminish the total amount of money which any Government would have to ask for. The Departments are very much opposed to having to come to Parliament for Supplementary Estimates, and I think that to put Votes together will tend in the direction of both economy and control. But the matter will shortly be considered by the Public Accounts Committee, and we shall be guided very much by the opinion they express as to the course to be taken. If it is deemed sufficient that the Comptroller and Auditor General should report every case of excess of expenditure on any sub-head it will be possible, either by an alteration of the law or by some regulation or instruction, to guard against the balance under one sub-head being appropriated under another sub-head.

(8.15.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: The Committee will appreciate the care with which the hon. Gentleman addressed himself to the point which I have raised, but I confess that his answer does not appear to me to be at all satisfactory, and that for more than one reason. We are asked to vote a lump sum, and are not told specifically how that sum is to be appropriated. We are told also that the matter has been referred to the Public Accounts Committee. Is the Public Accounts Committee in such a condition that it can direct how the sums of money voted in Committee of this House are to be appropriated? That is a function never contemplated for the Public Accounts Committee, and how it is to derive power to give such directions I do not know. As a matter of fact, the Public Accounts Committee has, in a special Report to the House, refused to arrogate to itself any authority to direct, or even to advise, with regard to the mode in which the Votes are to be submitted to the House of Commons. It is concerned only in the appropriation of public money after the money has been spent. We are in this difficulty, that if the Public Accounts Committee adheres to the Report which it made about a fortnight or three weeks ago, the House will have referred a matter to an Authority which declines to answer, and we shall be in the position that we shall have voted away sums of money for aggregate Services without any assurance whatever that the balance saved on one Service will not be devoted to some branch of the Service that was possibly never mentioned in the Estimates at all. I had hoped we should have some specific assurance from the Secretary to the Treasury that Votes were consolidated for convenience of procedure in Committee, but that for appropriation purposes each sub-total would be confined to the Services for which it was specifically obtained.

MR. JACKSON: I am sorry I did not make it clear to the hon. Gentleman and the Committee, but it was my intention to give that assurance. I am prepared, if it is desired, to come under a pledge that the surplus under one of these sub-heads shall not be devoted to the purposes of another sub-head.

(8.22.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do not quite understand whether the hon. Gentleman does come under that pledge.

MR. JACKSON: If the Public Accounts Committee adhere to their position.

MR. LABOUCHERE: If they adhere to the view that it is *ultra vires*, then the pledge that the hon. Gentleman has just given holds good? [MR. JACKSON: If it is desired.] I do not precisely know how far the wish of hon. Members now present in the House will be considered to be the desire of the House. [MR. JACKSON was understood to dissent.] Then we must go further. I was going to commence my holiday to-day, but the First Lord of the Treasury was good enough on Friday to give a sort of personal invitation to me to come here to-day and aid him in the transaction of business. Considering the great courtesy of the First Lord of the Treasury, and how anxious I am to oblige him so far as I possibly can, I have come here to aid him in carrying on business, though, perhaps, not in the way he desires—I have come here to look at the Votes in a deliberate, calm, impartial, and economical fashion. This Vote has always provoked a good deal of discussion. It divides itself into three different heads—into Palaces in the personal occupation of Her Majesty, Palaces partly in the occupation of Her Majesty, and Palaces not in the occupation of Her Majesty. In the case of

Buckingham Palace, I find a large expenditure on the Royal Mews. That has always been objected to, because we never understand why this vast expenditure is to take place in these Royal Mews considering that Her Majesty is seldom in London. Then I do not understand why we should pay so much in respect of St. James's and other Palaces not in the occupation of Her Majesty. A large number of persons have apartments there; but the very least that can be expected of them is that they should keep up their apartments, and provide their own fuel and light. Again, when structural alterations are made in any of the Palaces I do not see why they should be made at our expense. I find that £2,754 against £1,984 last year is asked for Kensington Palace. I should think the best thing to do is to clear that Palace away. It is in a miserable condition at present, and it must cost a great deal to keep it in repair. There are two good ways of dealing with the palace: one would be to clear it away, and the other to let it for a large restaurant for instance—of course, I should advocate that it should be a temperance restaurant. By the adoption of the latter plan we should get a rent for the Palace, and it would be used with advantage to the public. It has been suggested that it should be converted into a picture gallery, but it is too much out of the way for such a purpose. If it were swept away, the grounds might, with advantage, be thrown into Kensington Gardens. Hampton Court Palace is a People's Palace, and therefore I do not complain of the expenditure there, but we have got the Hampton Court Stud House. I should like some explanation about that. I have asked for many years what becomes of the foals. We expend money on stallions. I presume these animals have progeny, and that the foals are sold. We do not, however, get a farthing for any of the foals. Then we get the Kew Palace and buildings upon Kew Green. Now, I have never yet discovered what Kew Palace is. I have been often to Kew, and there I have seen a dead wall, over the top of which you may see part of a wretched looking house, which we understand to be Kew Palace. Who on earth lives in Kew Palace?

*MR. PLUNKET: Nobody.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Well, then, we have it on official authority that nobody lives there, and here we have this year £1,420 and last year £720 expended upon a place where nobody lives — a wretched, ramshackle place where, I believe, George III. lived while he was insane. At all events, it is a house of no use to any human being, and it is really ridiculous that it should continue to occupy land and prevent other persons from availing themselves of building leases there. Then we have a long list of houses and expenditure upon them for maintenance and repairs, and I believe every one of these houses has been lent to some lady or gentleman who occupies it. But if Her Majesty allows these houses to be occupied rent free, at least, I think, the occupants might be required to keep the houses in repair. The amount is not large, but the principle is one upon which I think we ought to register a protest. Here are buildings the use of which Her Majesty does not require, the maintenance of which costs £7,617. Now, in view of the fact that as I have said this is unnecessary expenditure against which we ought to register a protest, I beg to move a reduction of the Vote by £5,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £26,725 be granted for the said Service.—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*(9.8.) MR. MORTON: In connection with ——

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*MR. MORTON: I have been sent here to secure economy in the public expenditure. I do not intend to say a word against Her Majesty or against the Royal Family. But my attention has been particularly drawn to the item in this Vote for Light, Fuel, and Water. Surely these things ought to be paid for out of the allowances we make to the Royal Family? Now, I understand that the allowance to Her Majesty includes the maintenance and repair of Buckingham Palace and the other Palaces used by Her Majesty; but I take it it also includes new works unless they are required for the benefit of the nation. I find in connection with Buckingham Palace there is an item of £270 for fuel, light, water, and household articles. Why should we pay that? Why is it not paid out of the Royal allowance. Again, there has been an expenditure of £500 on some sanitary works at Pimlico Mews. Is there any occasion for keeping up those mews, seeing that they are never used by Her Majesty? Certainly by-and-bye we may have a Monarch who may make use of them; but until then they might be let, and I would suggest that if they were let to Mr. Barnum on the occasion of his next visit to this country a considerable sum might be realised for the benefit of the Public Exchequer. Now I come to Windsor Castle. Under the item for wages, I find that a labourer is paid a guinea a week, and that a turncock, in addition to receiving £1 8s. a week, gets an annual allowance of £8 for acting as rat-catcher. Why is not this paid out of the general allowance? I had supposed that the new drainage system in London had got rid of all the rats. There is a further payment of £10 a year to a rat-catcher employed at the Albert Memorial Chapel. I am not complaining of these amounts, but I do think they should be paid by Her Majesty out of the allowance made her by the nation. Now, I want to know who occupies the White Lodge, Regent's Park? On the general question, I must say I do not think that all these Palaces are required. Surely it is not necessary to keep up both Buckingham Palace and St. James's Palace. Buckingham Palace might be handed over to the people, who could hold their meetings there instead of at Trafalgar Square. It is of no use to Her Majesty, and therefore in the interests of economy, we might very well get rid of it. Kensington Palace might also be got rid of, because it is of no use to Her Majesty. I do not object to Her Majesty having several Palaces if only they are used by her. The London County Council are looking out for a building in which to meet, and, seeing the central position of this building, I think it might be a very desirable building in which they should meet for the transaction of their business. I want some information as to Hampton Court Studhouse, Kew Palace, the Military Knights' House at Windsor Castle, Holyrood Palace, and Marlborough House. At Kew last year we spent £700 on an empty house, and this year we are asked to spend another £1,400. I hope that in the interests of economy that Vote will be withdrawn, and that old Palace got rid of altogether. Then, why are the Military Knights' houses at Windsor kept up out of the public money? This expenditure does not appear to me to be for the good of the nation. For Holyrood Palace there is a Vote of £1,366, of which £700 is for maintenance and repairs. Now I do not object to this Vote, but what is going to be done with the money? When I was last at Holyrood I found it in a wretched condition; it did not look as if anything at all had been spent on it. Indeed, it is generally complained in Scotland that the public buildings are sadly neglected by the British Parliament. I do not know why that is so; perhaps it is because Scotland is so far away. No doubt when the Scottish people get Home Rule they will take better care of these old Palaces. I hold that Holyrood should be kept up; and I hope to hear how this money will be spent. In regard to Marlborough House, I am told there is a bargain with the Prince of Wales similar to the one made with the Queen. I, therefore, do not think the nation ought to pay for new works there, such as alterations to the steward's room. The Prince of Wales should pay for these things out of his allowance. Again, the people who occupy these Palaces should pay for their own coals and light and water. So long as the present system is allowed to exist you will never get real economy. If the Royal Family have not a sufficient grant allowed them at present to do so, then on another occasion sufficient money should be granted to them in order to meet all these items of expense, instead of the Government coming to Parliament and asking the taxpayers to pay the bills. It is in the interests of economy that an arrangement such as this should be put in force. Finally, let me point out that when these Votes are laid before the Committee, we are allowed to criticise them, but we are never allowed to reduce them. They are forced through the House of Commons without regard to our criticism. Unfortunately, the Government make the passing them a question of confidence, and consequently the supporters of the Government are obliged to vote them, whether they like it or not. I think the Liberals are as bad in this respect as the Conservatives when they are in power. The Committee ought to be able to reduce these Estimates regardless of Party allegiance, and an adverse vote ought not to affect the Government. Until you can discuss the Votes under these conditions, you will never get economy practised in any Department. I see there is an item for Insurance, Tithe Rent-Charges, &c. Now, we have been told that tithe is a religious payment; then surely the Royal Family might set the people a good example by paying their own tithes. I do not think the Palaces ought to be occupied by Royal favourites; but if they are, then these tenants should be made to keep the premises in repair at their own expense in the same way that other tenants for life are bound to hand over houses to their successors in good repair. Clergymen who occupy vicarages are bound to do this; then why should not friends of the Royal Family, who are allowed to occupy these Palaces, be compelled to do a similar thing? It is our duty to endeavour to induce this Parliament to secure greater economy in these Votes; and I warn the Government that if they do not, we may presently get a new Parliament which will make greater changes than they may dream of. Personally, I should prefer these changes to be made gradually, and, therefore, I ask this Committee to make a beginning. It is easy to spend other people's money; but when a man has to spend his own, he generally endeavours to do it in the most economical manner. It seems to me that the expenditure of this country is increasing from year to year, and we ought, wherever we can, to practise economy. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to assure us that in future the works coming under these Estimates will be put out to tender, as it is a well-known fact that where the present system is carried out, the tradesmen arrange among themselves who shall get the contract—that, in point of fact, there is what is known as a "knock out" amongst them, the only possible check upon which would be the issue of advertisements inviting tenders from every one desirous of doing the work. This is the method pursued by nearly all other authorities, and has been found to work well in practice. I must apologise for having kept the House so long. I have done so solely in the interests of economy, having been specially pledged on that subject to my constituents.

(9.33.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): I am altogether opposed to any increased expenditure on this Vote, as I think the incomes possessed by those who occupy the Royal Palaces ought to suffice for the outlay required upon them. The increase does not arise on Palaces in the occupation of Her Majesty, but on the other two classes, namely, Palaces partially in Her Majesty's occupation and Palaces not in the occupation of Her Majesty. On some of the Palaces in Her Majesty's occupation there are large reductions. For instance, the amount required for Windsor Castle is reduced from £6,800 to £6,325; but when we come to other Palaces, we find the result to be the other way. Surely we ought to have some explanation of the increased expenditure now asked for, especially in regard to such charges as are made for the supply of fuel and water to those who occupy these Palaces.

(9.36.) MR. H. COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): Many of the items that appear under the head of this Vote are so insignificant and trivial that they may almost be characterised as petty. I think that the only ground on which we can be asked to defray these charges is where they contribute to the benefit of the general public; but it can hardly be for the advantage of the public to maintain a number of Palaces which they are unable to use. I call on the Government to see that something is done that will enable a proper use to be made of these Palaces. Whether the Motion of my hon. Friend is the right one I am hardly prepared to say. I do not think some of these items are calculated to deepen respect for existing institutions, for I observe that they include money for ratcatchers, bellringers, fuel, and so forth. I think it is the plain duty of the Government to get rid of this expenditure and to economise.

(9.40.) DR. TANNER: I will not follow my hon. Friend into details, although most of his remarks are sensible ones. In view of the progress of the age, I think a good many of these mediæval remnants might be done away with, and common-sense opinions made to prevail. Really, as one who has had the disadvantage of listening to these recurring debates year after year, I think something might be done to adopt proper phraseology in describing the duties of certain people. But I rise for the purpose of eliciting information with respect to a series of items which have cropped up again this year in connection with the Royal Palaces. I observe an item relating to sanitary work. Year after year I have been trying to get other medical men in this House to give proper attention to this subject with the view of effecting some useful economy. Each year we have this item of sanitary works. The Royal Mews, Pimlico, sanitary works, £500; White Lodge, Richmond Park, £250; St. James's Palace, not in the occupation of Her Majesty, £500; Kensington Palace, £755; Kew Palace and buildings on Kew Green, £475. For "works and alterations of a minor character"—it does not say whether these are sanitary or not—there is a sum £500. I should not so much object to this expenditure if it were brought on one year, but we have it coming up year after year, and I think it is throwing away money not by the hundreds, but by the thousands, and we have this wasteful extravagance when, week after week and month after month, there are poor starving wretches coming into this City. The hon. Member for Peterborough was right in insisting that there should be satisfactory tenders for this work; and we know that if, under a system of tenders for the work, you had this constantly recurring expenditure, you would have someone whom you could hold responsible. I really press the right hon. Gentleman whether this is not a matter to which some remedy could be applied? I admit that these old Palaces require to have adapted to them from time to time recent sanitary improvements, but I certainly think that should not involve the necessity of a large annual charge. A good deal of money has been spent on Pimlico Mews, a place for the housing not of men, but of horses. Further, some of these Palaces are not occupied by Her Majesty, but by a number of pensioners. And this I would say, that when you are incurring this expenditure, you certainly ought to enter into some good and satisfactory contract. I certainly should not think I was doing my duty if I did not rise to obtain some explanation of this expenditure. Why have these alterations been made? Because of disease or infection, or merely in consequence of speculative opinions offered by advisers? I should like to know what reasons the right hon. Gentleman has to advance in connection with these matters.

(9.55.) MR. DILLWYN (Swansea): There is one point I should like some special information upon. What is the use of Kew Palace? Is it used by pensioners, servants, or caretakers? I think we ought to have a specific answer upon that point before we are called upon to spend more money on an old, useless, and rotten Palace.

*(9.56.) MR. PLUNKET: I hope the hon. Member for Fermanagh will not think me unreasonable if I now interpose between him and the House in order to reply to the questions which have been addressed to me. An hour has already been spent in discussing this particular item, and the Committee do not appear to be getting much "forrarder." Underlying the whole of the questions which have been put to me is the assumption that the Palaces we maintain ought to be only personally in the occupation of Her Majesty. Now, when this question came up last year I explained the whole case. The fact of the matter is that all these Royal Palaces and houses for which we ask a vote to be taken in this House were formerly provided for out of the Civil List. What happened? The view taken at the commencement of the reign of William IV. was this: that it would be better, in future, that these Palaces should not be provided for out of the Civil List, but should be borne by the Votes of Parliament. And the way that came about was because a very strong and influential Committee which sat to consider this very question of the Civil List at the beginning of the reign of

William IV. recommended that a great number of other expenses which had fallen under the Civil List should be transferred to, and undertaken by, the Votes of Parliament. That recommendation was made in 1831. And, accordingly, these Royal Palaces were placed under the Surveyor General in 1831 in consideration of the reduction of the Civil List from £1,200,000 to £500,000, or more than one-half. That method of dealing with these charges was re-considered at the commencement of the present reign; and the Committee on the Civil Lists then, as always appointed on the accession of a new Monarch, reported strongly in favour of continuing the arrangement of 1831. They said that the change had worked extremely well and economically. The Report of the Committee of 1831 contains a schedule setting out the charges which had been formerly borne by the Civil List, and which were to be transferred to Parliament under the arrangement I have described; and amongst the charges there set out are the expenses of the Office of Works in regard to all these Palaces. Parliament, in fact, undertook to provide for the maintenance and repair of all these Palaces.

*MR. MORTON: Does that apply to fires, fuel, and lighting?

*MR. PLUNKET: Yes, Sir, all that. Everything for the up-keep of the Palaces. I hope, under the circumstances, hon. Members will not expect me to go through all the cases to which allusion has been made. There are two cases, however, which I must deal with, as a certain amount of misapprehension seems to prevail with regard to them. One was mentioned by the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), and with regard to that I am specially anxious that this misapprehension should not prevail. The hon. Member referred to the Palace at Kew. It is the duty of the Office of Works under the arrangement I have mentioned to keep up not only that Palace, but also Cambridge Cottage, which is in the occupation of the Duke of Cambridge, and Church House.

MR. LABOUCHERE: "Church" House?

*MR. PLUNKET: Yes; that is merely the name of the place. It is not attached to a Church. The item for sanitary improvements, to which attention has been called, is connected with these buildings, and not the empty Palace. The Local Authorities of Kew have initiated a new system of drainage there, and, as a result, it has been found necessary to undertake these works. As to the alterations at St. James's Palace, they have become necessary owing to the decease of the Duchess of Cambridge, who was the last occupant of the Palace, and the necessity for putting the building into a condition to receive a new occupant. That new occupant will be Prince Albert Victor. I wish it to be understood, however, that the expense which has been incurred in preparing the Palace for Prince Albert Victor is no more than would have been necessary if the new occupant had been anyone else. There must be considerable additional outlay on alterations owing to the circumstances that the son of the Prince of Wales is about to occupy the Palace; but all this additional outlay will be borne by the Prince of Wales. The hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton) has complained of a matter to which one or two other Members have adverted, namely, the item for fuel. They say, "Why do you not make these personages pay for their own fuel?" and one hon. Member even went so far as to say that Her Majesty should be required to pay for fuel out of the Privy Purse. Well, as a matter of fact, Her Majesty and the other personages in question do pay for the fuel they use out of their private means. The items charged in the estimate for fuel are simply in relation to coal used for heating apparatus, and similar purposes, in the public parts of the Palaces. Then the hon. Member for Mid Cork asked me about sanitary repairs in connection with the Royal Mews.

DR. TANNER: I did not refer to the Royal Mews at Pimlico alone. I referred to a long list of places where sanitary repairs had been made.

*MR. PLUNKET: I understood that. I would point out that the Royal Mews is on the schedule I have referred to. There is permanent accommodation there for 230 persons, besides a large number of horses; and the works carried on there have been such as have been rendered necessary by sanitary considerations. The outlay was not one which it was possible to reduce. Every one of the sanitary works—which are now going on, and which I hope will soon be completed — have been undertaken with great reluctance by myself, and still more reluctantly acceded to by my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury. We only undertook them because they were absolutely necessary. I hope the Committee will think that I have given sufficient answer to the questions addressed to me.

(10.15.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I would draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that when we entered into the arrangement at the commencement of the reign of Her Majesty no sort of arrangement was made to maintain these Palaces. What we did was to relieve Her Majesty altogether of the obligation of maintaining them; and, if that had not been the case, why should it be necessary to submit the Vote to Parliament and to ask hon. Members from year to year to sanction these items? It is absurd to suppose that we are under an obligation to the Sovereign to maintain houses which are absolutely unnecessary. As to the £1,700 charged for Church House and Cambridge Cottage, the right hon. Gentleman says the outlay was necessary, as new drainage works were being carried out by the Local Authorities; but I have had quite recent experience of connecting houses with drainage systems and am in a position to say that the expense in the case of a single house should not exceed £10 or £20. But we have heard of these drainage charges before from the right hon. Gentleman's predecessors. I know my old friend the drains. The Government are always getting houses connected with them at enormous expense. As to the charge of £152 for heating this deserted Palace at Kew, this amount represents 140 tons of coal, which would never have been used in one house. As a matter of fact, this money is absorbed by a number of sponging drones. They get something, in all probability, out of these sanitary works also; and I protest altogether against such payments and against keeping up these unnecessary establishments.

(10.20.) MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): The right hon. Gentleman asks the Committee to believe that the Crown would not recommend this expenditure if it were not absolutely necessary, and he also spoke of the reluctance of the Treasury to authorise such expenditure. I am sure there is no Member here who would for a moment insinuate that the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works or the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury have authorised the expenditure of this large sum, knowing that it was unnecessary. What we complain of is that Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench are themselves duped and hoodwinked by others. I do not suppose they have gone over all these Palaces to see what was necessary to be done. We all know that there are no people more likely to bring about a job than builders and contractors; and when we find that year after year large sums of money are asked for putting various buildings into a sanitary condition, and that notwithstanding such expenditure they never seem to be in a sanitary condition, I think we have legitimate cause for complaint. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Plunket) gave us an interesting account of how the maintenance of these Palaces came to be thrown on the country. No doubt all he said was true, but it did not at all go to prove that it is either necessary or advantageous that thousands of pounds should be spent every year in maintaining Palaces in which nobody lives. I believe the Queen does sometimes go to Buckingham Palace; but she never goes to Hampton Court, or Kew, or St. James's Palace, and there are a variety of other buildings of the kind to which the members of the Royal Family never go. I say it is in the interest of the Royal Family that expenditure of this kind should not be allowed. There is, undoubtedly, a strong feeling throughout the country that it is monstrous for Parliament to be called on year after year to spend £36,000 in maintaining buildings which absolutely serve no purpose at all. Only the other day an appeal was made to the generosity of the country to provide money for the equipment of the Volunteers. I am not very much in favour of warlike preparations of any kind myself, but I say that if you are to have Volunteers they ought to be effectively equipped. Why cannot the large sums of money which are wasted on the maintenance of uninhabited Palaces be spent on the equipment of the Volunteer Force, and in helping to provide better houses for the unfortunate poor people of this City? When one walks through the streets of this town, even under the very shadow of the walls of this House, and finds them filled with unfortunate wretches who are half starved and at the last stage of misery, it does seem a monstrous thing that money should be squandered in this way. Nobody on these Benches objects to spending what is necessary and proper in maintaining Palaces for the Queen, but we do object to spending money on houses which are never used at all. We believe that the Government Officials are humbugged by contractors. Are there no means by which a satisfactory conclusion could be arrived at as to whether this expenditure is necessary or not? I am certain that if an investigation could be made, it would be found that a great part of the expenditure is unnecessary.

*MR. MORTON: I am sorry to detain the Committee; but I do not thoroughly understand this Vote, and the right hon. Gentleman has left several of my questions unanswered. One of them related to the Estimate of £1,165 for furniture, another to repairs at Holyrood Palace, and another to public tendering. I am glad to hear that these buildings belong to the nation, because, when we get a more democratic Parliament, we shall know what to do with them, and that with very little trouble. The right hon. Gentleman has said that one of the houses at Kew is occupied by the Duke of Cambridge. I object to public money being provided to keep up a cottage for the Duke of Cambridge. His Royal Highness receives a large allowance from this House, and a large salary, and he is the last person in the United Kingdom who ought to call on the House of Commons for money, for a house, furniture, fuel, or anything of the sort.

(10.32.) MR. PICTON: I really must press for an answer to some questions I asked the right hon. Gentleman. Surely it is of some consequence to the Committee to know why the expenditure on the Palaces in the present occupation of Her Majesty has not increased, whilst that upon Palaces not in the occupation of Her Majesty has increased. Again, I want to know why it is that the cost of keeping up Kew Palace is precisely double—£1,420 instead of £710? I admit it is very humiliating to have to discuss these matters in a Committee of the whole House, but the right hon. Gentleman ought to remember that the annoyance arises from an increasing discord between the feeling of the age and the customs manifested in these Estimates. The feeling is more for spending money in public needs and not on old-fashioned institutions which do no good to anyone. Public feeling has not shown any tendency to object to reasonable expenditure for the comfort, and state, and splendour of the Court. What public feeling does object to is spending money on old buildings that are of no good to anyone in the world. I really think if hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite knew the true interests of the institution which they always boast of defending, they would offer some proper explanation of this expenditure.

*(10.37.) MR. PLUNKET: I really think we ought to have some regard to the proportion of things and for the time of the House. Hon. Members opposite have occupied an hour and a half of public time in discussing such questions as whether it is necessary to have ratcatchers and turncocks at the Royal Palaces. I am anxious to afford every information of an important character that is asked for, but it is too much to occupy the time of the Committee for so long upon subjects of trifling importance. The expenditure on Palaces has nothing whatever to do with whether or not the Palaces are in the occupation of Her Majesty. The hon. Member for Peterborough asks for information as to the expenditure on furniture. £700 has been expended for furniture for St. James's Palace, which is used for public purposes, and £300 in improving the entrance to the Picture Gallery at Hampton Court, in order to make it more commodious, and, therefore, more adapted for the enjoyment of the people who visited the

gallery. Thus £1,000 is at once accounted for.

*(10.40.) MR. CREMER: I hope the hon. Member for Northampton will press his Motion to a Division, not because we wish to waste the time of the House in discussing questions of ratcatchers or the other trifling matters to which the right hon. Gentleman has alluded, but because we are anxious to register our votes, in the name of the people who have to pay, against the expenditure of £36,000 for the maintenance of seven residences for the very few people who inhabit them. It was my painful duty early one summer's morning not many years ago to walk through St. James's Park, and I counted on and around seats within 300 yards of Buckingham Palace 27 poor creatures huddled together trying to keep themselves warm in the morning air. Each of them looked as if they were on the verge of starvation. A policeman came along and roused them from their miserable slumbers. A more wretched spectacle I never saw! As I stood and looked at these poor creatures and then at that enormous building—Buckingham Palace—in which no one save the hangers-on had resided for five months at the time I witnessed that spectacle, I asked myself, and the people who have to pay this money ask themselves, whether this is a specimen of the civilisation of which we boast in the 19th century. It is not necessary, however dignified and exalted the occupant of the Throne may be, that he or she should have seven residences. It is to protest against this waste of public money and against the glaring anomaly to which I have just made allusion that I shall follow the hon. Member for Northampton into the Lobby. There is just one question I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman, and which he has, I am sure, not purposely evaded. It was the question I addressed to him earlier in the sitting. It is why the Department over which the right hon. Gentleman presides with so much dignity, and I believe in the main usefulness, does not think it worth his while to issue public tenders for furniture? It is well to say that any respectable firm can, by making application, get its name put on the list; but I have not yet been able to learn that firms, who may get put on the list, ever know when furniture is required in any Government office. If they do not know that, how is it possible they can tender? If there was a disposition to do so, it is very easy for the Department to issue through the public Press tenders indicating that a certain quantity of furniture is required by a given date, and that the Government are open to receive tenders. Then there is an item of £4,325 for repairs. Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to say whether those repairs and alterations are done by contract—whether tenders are invited for the work, or whether the work is confined to a few firms who are thus able to arrange matters amongst themselves? It is quite an understood thing that privileged firms do occasionally enter into arrangements, and that, in consequence, the public suffer. A system of open tender would put an end to this sort of thing.

(10.45.) DR. TANNER: I merely rise to ask the right hon. Gentleman to give his attention to the one point which I raised earlier in the evening, and that is as to the sanitary works at the Royal Mews, Kensington Palace. Were the works undertaken under medical advice? Then in the matter of insurance. Some of the Palaces are insured and others are not. What is the reason of this?

(10.47.) MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I cannot but think that this subject has been entirely exhausted. I have endeavoured to do right by sitting out the discussion, and I think that every phase of the Vote has been fully discussed. I hope the hon. Member for Northampton, with whom many of us agree in many points, will not put the Committee to the trouble of a Division.

*(10.49.) MR. PLUNKET: The sanitary works were, in many instances, rendered necessary by medical reports. The drains were in the worst possible condition, and money was absolutely required to be spent. As to insurance, my impression is that the persons occupying the houses pay the insurance, but I will make further inquiries on the point.

*MR. CREMER: I have put two questions of considerable importance to the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. PLUNKET: I have answered them twice already. As regards furniture, I have said we are willing to put any respectable firm on the list who choose to apply; and as to tenders we do invite tenders where the work to be done is sufficiently great as to make it wise to do so. Many of the works are extremely small, and they are executed by contractors we specially employ.

(10.55.) The House divided:—Ayes 61; Noes 159.—(Div. List, No. 40.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £78,775, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

*(11.5.) MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I rise to move the reduction of this Vote by £701 in respect to the maintenance of Hampton Court Park. This Motion is a hardy annual, but I hope that this is the last year in which it will be necessary to bring it forward. The argument in favour of the proposition which I am about to submit to the Committee is so strong that if it were not for one's experience upon other matters, it would be surprising that it should have been necessary to reiterate it so frequently to the Committee. Hampton Court Park comprises an area equal to that of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park combined; it is in the midst of rural scenery; it is public property, and yet from this public property the public are absolutely excluded, the enjoyment of it being reserved for deer and horses, and some 90 favoured families in the neighbourhood who pay a guinea a year for the privilege of possessing a key. This matter was very strongly pressed upon the attention of the right hon. Gentleman last year in Committee, and he then said that he had not had that amount of public pressure brought to bear upon him to enable him to overrule the natural reluctance of the Treasury to add to the expenses of the Park. Now, if he would only specify the precise character and degree of the pressure to which he would succumb, I should be glad to take my share in the application of the necessary stimulant. But seriously I do think that since he spoke in March last, he has had brought before him, in a manner it is impossible to dispute, strong evidence of the existence of a large body of public opinion in favour of throwing open the Park to the public. I have had sent to me a copy of a local newspaper suggesting that this matter should be brought forward and strongly urged again this year, and from the tone of the leaders I gather that this newspaper is of a distinctly Conservative complexion. In this paper I find an account of a deputation which in August last waited upon the right hon. Gentleman and urged him to consent to the opening of the Park to the public, and this deputation certainly carried with it a considerable amount of public weight. It included the Mayor of Kingston and representatives of other Local Bodies in the neighbourhood, and they suggested that the public should merely have permission to cross the Park along the footpaths which already exist; and that, in fact, the privilege which is now monopolised by a few favoured residents should be shared by the public at large. The right hon. Gentlemen has always strongly insisted upon the expense that would be involved; but I see that the responsible members of this deputation assured him that, so far as one item of expense was concerned, he need be under no anxiety, as they would guarantee on the part of the locality the expense of four self-acting gates giving access to the Park. The right hon. Gentleman has had, then, some of the pressure he last year said was wanting, so one ground of objection is removed. The other day he was asked a question as to some changes made in the administration of the Park, and I understand he told us that the deer hitherto maintained there were about to be replaced by horses or foals—and, as an hon. Member suggests, cattle—and we were also told that grazing would be let to the Master of the Horse at a net gain to the Exchequer of £600 a year. Now, whether it is £100 or £600, I think the suggestion of a net gain to the Exchequer as the result of the operation is rather calculated to raise a smile, because surely the nominal transfer of the amount from one public official to another—from the Master of the Horse to the First Commissioner of Works—can hardly be regarded as a real source

of public revenue. This consideration, I think, may be omitted. As I understand, the demand put forward by the people resident in the locality, all they desire is to be permitted to cross the Park, and therefore if their right, as I shall put it, can be conceded, and at the same time the grazing can be let to the Master of the Horse, well and good but if it becomes a question whether the enjoyment of the Park by the public, or by the horses and cattle, is to be first considered, I, for one, maintain that the interest of the public ought to have the first place. This is a public Park; it is public property; and it is surely little short of scandalous that it should practically be only available to some 90 favoured families. It is a matter which year after year has been pressed upon the First Commissioners and it is clearly a concession, if you choose to call it a concession, which must eventually come. I cannot but think the right hon. Gentleman would be well advised to make the concession at once with a good grace. For these reasons, which are not new, which I regret to say it has been necessary to urge year after year, I beg to emphasise my protest by moving the reduction of the Vote by £701.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a reduced sum of £78,074 be granted."

*(11.15.) MR. PLUNKET: The grounds upon which the hon. Member brings forward his Motion this year are somewhat different from those on which it was formerly brought forward. Hitherto it has been considered as a grievance which ought to be redressed that, whereas the public paid for the maintenance of Hampton Court Home Park, they were not admitted to the enjoyment of it. Well, I need not traverse that argument, because, as I will explain, that state of affairs no longer exists. But I think there is, generally, some misapprehension as to the real state of the case. It is generally supposed that this has been, at some time or other, a Park open to the general public; but, that the public have been excluded from a right they formerly enjoyed. That is a misapprehension altogether. The Park has never at any time been thrown open to the public; it has always been reserved for the stud of half-bred horses belonging to Her Majesty; and there is a stud house there which we are obliged to maintain, which we cannot legally dispose of or destroy. The question presents itself, whether the character of the Park is or is not to be changed; whether, apart from any grievance, it is a Park that should be thrown open to the public. It must, I think, be admitted that in this particular place the exclusion of the public from the Park is not, at the worst, such a serious deprivation, as it might be in another place, for the public have at hand the grounds and gardens of Hampton Court Palace and Bushey Park on the other side of the road. The hon. Member has said that a few favoured individuals are admitted to the enjoyment of the Park; but I believe the only persons are those resident in Hampton Court Palace, and a few others, who pay a guinea a year for a key of admission. Then the hon. Gentleman has referred to my observation on a former occasion, when I said that no great pressure had been put upon the Government to induce them to make the change, and he has mentioned a deputation which did me the honour of waiting upon me last autumn. Well, the deputation was one from the immediate neighbourhood of Hampton Court Palace, from Kingston and adjoining places, and they certainly stated, with great propriety from their point of view, a strong desire that the Park should be thrown open. But then it must be remembered that, if thrown open at all, it must be in obedience to the demand of the public generally; because if it is no longer used for the purposes to which it is at present devoted, it must be maintained entirely at the public expense. It is quite true that up to the present time the public have been saddled with such maintenance; but by the arrangement I have mentioned, by the abolition of the herd of deer which were the source of some expense to the nation, this item will disappear from the Estimates, an item of £150 a year, and other small sums, making, I think, about £200. Not only that, but in consideration of the fact that there will no longer be deer there, there will be an increased rental for grazing of horses

of about £500 or £600, so that we shall now actually have a small profit on the Park. It must further be said that the expenses the deputation said they were willing to undertake if the Park were thrown open is but a small part of the expenses that would be incurred. It would be necessary if the public were permitted full enjoyment of the Park that additional expense should be undertaken for footpaths and perhaps roads and for management and police. Under all the circumstances, the Government have come to the conclusion that it would be better to keep the Park in its present condition, but that the public should no longer be called upon to provide for the maintenance, and that the item should disappear from the Estimates.

(11.22.) **Dr. TANNER**: The right hon. Gentleman will remember that a question was put to him in reference to the grazing. I should like to ask what amount will be realised from the lettings, and will they include grazings for cattle as well as horses? I should also like to know how the income will be expended; whether it will go to the relief of those who have hitherto borne the cost of maintenance?

*(11.24.) **Mr. PLUNKET**: The grazing will be mainly for the purpose of the stud establishment. I am not aware how far the Master of the Horse may think it desirable to include the grazing of cattle. As to the money derived from the letting that goes into the Exchequer as a set-off against expenses in a general way.

(11.25.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 67; Noes 142.—(Div. List, No. 41.)

Original Question again proposed.

(11.35.) **Mr. PICTON**: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman about certain enclosures in Regent's Park which have been made during the past year. I do not say that they are not justifiable, because, probably, they have been made in order to allow the grass which has been destroyed by excessive traffic to grow again; but I want to know if, when the land is again covered with grass, the enclosures will be thrown open for the perambulation of the public? Otherwise, the enjoyable area of the Park will be considerably reduced.

(11.36.) **Mr. CAUSTON** (Southwark, W.): What are the present arrangements with regard to games being played in the Royal Parks—games such as lawn tennis, and cricket, and football? Cannot more facilities be given for the people to indulge in these games in the Parks? Surely a portion of Hyde Park might be set aside for that purpose. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give the Committee some information on the subject.

*(11.38.) **Mr. CREMER** (Shoreditch, Haggerston): A portion of the land at Kew Gardens has been railed off, and the public thereby excluded from it. I should like to know why, and I should also like to know what is the cost to the British taxpayer of keeping in repair the building which stands within the enclosure, and which is said to have formerly been a Royal residence?

(11.39.) **Mr. LABOUCHERE**: How many houses are there at the disposal of the Crown in Kew Gardens? Does the present Director live in one?

***Mr. PLUNKET**: Yes.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The other day I asked a question as to the widening of Knightsbridge Road, for which purpose a portion of the Park is to be used. No doubt it will be a considerable advantage to the public. But some years ago, when Mr. Ayrton brought in a Bill with a similar object, it was thrown out by the House. Now, while I do not object to the improvement being carried out, I do think it is doubtful whether the land should be taken without first passing a Bill through the House for the purpose; because if you can give a small portion of the Park away without the assent of Parliament you can equally well give away a large part of it. Would it not be better for the right hon. Gentleman to bring in a Bill order to carry out this useful scheme?

*(11.42.) **Mr. PLUNKET**: I hope hon. Members will excuse me if I only make a brief reply. With regard to what has been called an enclosure in Regent's Park, it consists merely of palings which anyone can step across; the fact of the matter being that the grass has been completely worn away. If hereafter it can be done I shall be glad to have the palings removed; but I can-

not give an undertaking until I see how the grass turns out. With regard to the question of games in St. James's Park and the Green Park, it is obviously impossible to entertain the idea. In Regent's Park a considerable amount of ground is devoted to this purpose, and I am afraid that the Government cannot go beyond what has been done there. The question with regard to Hyde Park has been considered again and again; but, with the best wishes to provide the public with ground for games, the conclusion I have come to is that, considering the immense amount of traffic, the public meetings, and the reviews of troops, we cannot provide space for cricket or football. I regret that I cannot give an answer with regard to the enclosed space in Kew Gardens; but if the hon. Member will put down a question I will endeavour to get the necessary information. With regard to the question referred to by the hon. Member for Northampton, it is true that Mr. Ayrton brought in a Bill when he made what was in some respects a somewhat similar proposal, but in other respects the cases were entirely different. In the former case the proposal was to take a considerable amount of ground, and a very considerable advantage would have resulted to private individuals; in the latter case only a very small amount of the Park was required for what would, I think, be a public improvement. Under these circumstances, I was prepared to entertain the proposals of the Vestry—they seem, however, to have dropped the matter, I believe, because the London County Council refused to join them in the expense of making the desired changes.

*(11.47.) MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I am quite a novice in Supply, and therefore I will venture to ask a few questions with regard to the Vote under consideration, but I will not detain the House long. Now, I notice there is a item of £1,140 for the department of the Ranger at Richmond Park, and of this there are no less than £669 charged for the salaries of the Ranger himself, a Deputy Ranger, of a superintendent under the Ranger, and of an assistant superintendent under the Ranger, as well as for a bailiff of the Royal Parks. I move to reduce the Vote by £669, and I want to know what are the duties of these officials? What does the Ranger do? I have never seen any ranging going on, although I lived near one of the Parks at one time.

*(11.53.) MR. PLUNKET: The bailiff has the management of all the Royal Parks. The Ranger and his assistants have also considerable responsibilities. Amongst others, they have the charge of the herds of deer, and of the gate lodges and lodge-keepers.

*(11.54.) MR. MORTON: Who is the Head Ranger? Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us that?

*MR. PLUNKET: The Duke of Cambridge.

*(11.55.) MR. MORTON: I want a little more information as to the expenditure on these Parks, and I hope that the Government will not object to give it. There is a sum of £142 for incidental expenses. What is that for? I find, further, that the expenses for St. James's, Green Park, and Hyde Park are lumped together, and that the items are not set out separately and in sufficient detail to enable hon. Members to check or compare them. Further than that, I find there is an allowance to the Superintendent under the Ranger of £96 in lieu of fees. I object to the fee system altogether. I think we are entitled to further details of this item. Another official gets £20 in lieu of fees. What is the meaning of that? I should like to point out that the Head Ranger, the Deputy Ranger, and the Superintendent under the Ranger are military officers.

(11.58.) DR. TANNER: My hon. Friends around me have good cause to complain that the new arrangement of the Estimates by the Government has increased the difficulty of dealing with these questions, and I think we have just cause of complaint on this head. I know hon. Gentlemen opposite do not complain because they are not allowed to speak on the Estimates. Now, I want to know something about the chairs which are stacked in a great heap near Kensington Park. What is done with the money realised by letting out these chairs? Is it applied to keeping them in repair? As to games being played in the parks, I noticed when I was at Darlington the other day that, in the small park there, boys were playing at football. Surely, then, a portion of such a huge park as Hyde Park should be devoted to such a purpose.

Question put, and agreed to.

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Committee to sit again to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.—(No. 200.)

Order for Committee read.

SIR R. N. FOWLER: I object.

*MR. HOWELL: There are several Amendments on the Paper which have been agreed to, and the House must go into Committee to dispose of these, and then report Progress.

MR. PARKER SMITH: I would ask the hon. Gentleman whether he agrees to the other Amendments on the Paper?

*MR. HOWELL: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade can state whether arrangements have been made.

*SIR M. H. BEACH: I would ask the hon. Member to withdraw his objection for the present, and allow the Amendments agreed upon to be taken, and the remaining Amendments can be discussed at a later stage.

SIR R. N. FOWLER: I withdraw my objection, Sir; but hon. Members opposite will remember that a good many Bills emanating from this side are objected to, and they cannot be surprised if we object to their Bills in return.

Bill considered in Committee, and Amendments made; Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

POOR LAW (IRELAND) RATING BILL. (No. 149.) COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

(12.13.) MR. SEXTON: I have no objection to the principle of this Bill, but it requires certain Amendments.

MR. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.): There are Amendments on the Paper to meet the case.

MR. SEXTON: The hon. Member's Amendments are not sufficient.

Committee deferred till Monday, 28th April.

METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT AND BUILDING ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL. (No. 132.) SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(12.14.) MR. H. W. LAWSON: We do not object to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Sussex, if he will allow the Bill to be read a second time.

*MR. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I object.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I hope the hon. Gentleman will withdraw his objection.

*MR. M'LAREN: There are two Scotch Education Motions down for discussion, and if we are to discuss these Bills at any length we will not reach those Motions. But I will not press my objection.

Second Reading deferred till Monday, 14th April.

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 15.)

Read a second time, and committed for Friday, 18th April.

MOTION.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT (SCOTLAND) (REDHYTHE BURSARIES, &c., FORDYCE).

(12.16.) SIR C. DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): I have to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from that part of the Scheme of the Educational Endowment (Scotland) Commissioners for the management of the Endowments in the County of Banff, known as the Redhythe

Bursaries, George Smith's Bounty, and the Stuart Mortification, which consists of and is contained in the following words of Section 26 of the said Scheme (that is to say), 'or with the consent of the Governors at any School where higher instruction is efficiently given which the bursar could attend while living with parents or relatives.'"

In making this Motion I have to state that I have no connection with the locality to which the scheme refers, and have only taken it up on public grounds, with a view of carrying out what was the original view of the Scotch Education Department before that Department was influenced by certain representations made by those who are interested in the locality. The Motion proposes to restore the scheme to the form in which it stood in 1888. There is no question as to the benefit conferred by these bursaries, which were formerly bestowed by patronage, being now extended to the whole county. They are to be open under the scheme to the whole county for competition by students in Banffshire, the one point at issue being whether the parish of Fordyce, which is the original locality of the scheme, should be deprived of the advantage of having the bursars educated there. The Motion I propose is only a small modification of the scheme, and the effect of the deletion of the words objected to will be that while the benefits of the bursaries are to be extended to the whole county the advantages of education shall not be withdrawn from the parish of Fordyce.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from that part of the Scheme of the Educational Endowment (Scotland) Commissioners for the management of the Endowments in the County of Banff, known as the Redhythe Bursaries, George Smith's Bounty and the Stuart Mortification, which consists of and is contained in the following words of Section 26 of the said Scheme (that is to say), 'or with the consent of the Governors at any school where higher instruction is efficiently given which the bursar could attend while living with parents or relatives.'"—*(Sir Charles Dalrymple.)*

*(12.26.) MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): I cannot but acknowledge the moderation with which the hon. Baronet has introduced this Motion. He has refrained from introducing a Motion which would

involve the rejection of the scheme as a whole, and has merely dealt with one point which has already caused a good deal of discussion in the North. There has been a difference of opinion as to whether the bursars under this scheme should be required to attend school at Fordyce. It appeared to the Commissioners that the competition for the bursaries ought to be thrown open to boys from all parts of the county. It was, therefore, considered reasonable that the Governors should be empowered to dispense with the condition of the bursars all going to Fordyce for their education. On that point there was some difference of opinion; but the Commissioners thought the preponderance of argument was in favour of this extension of power to the Governing Body.

(12.28.) MR. HALDANE (Haddington): I would ask the House to pause before assenting to the proposal of the hon. Baronet. It is worthy of attention that the local opinion not only in the county but in the burghs is not entirely favourable to this suggestion of extended competition. We know that the Commissioners have made considerable inquiry in the locality, and have the advantage of much information which hon. Members have not been in a position to obtain. Moreover, hon. Members for the county and burghs connected with the scheme, acting on representations made by their constituents, are favourable to the scheme. I think, therefore, the House would do well to pause before overthrowing the conclusions at which the Commissioners have arrived.

(12.30.) The House divided:—Ayes 104; Noes 75.—(Div. List, No. 42.)

Resolved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold her consent from that part of the Scheme of the Educational Endowment (Scotland) Commissioners for the management of the Endowments in the County of Banff, known as the Redhythe Bursaries, George Smith's Bounty, and the Stuart Modification, which consists of and is contained in the following words of Section 26 of the said Scheme (that is to say), "or with the consent of the Governors at any School where higher instruction is efficiently given which the bursar could attend while living with parents or relatives."

To be presented by Privy Councillors.

ACCIDENTS (FACTORIES, RAILWAYS, AND MINES.)

Address for—

"Return showing (i.) in the case of Factories and Workshops, the number of Accidents which were reported to the Inspectors in the year ended the 31st day of October 1889, under Section 31 of 'The Factory and Workshop Act, 1878,' as having happened to persons employed in Factories and Workshops under the Act, distinguishing between fatal and non-fatal Accidents, giving separately the numbers for Factories and Workshops and the nature of the various employments in which the Accidents occurred, and stating the numbers of the persons employed in all Factories; (ii.) in the case of Railways, the number of Servants of Railway Companies reported during the year ended the 31st day of December 1889, under Section 6 of 'The Regulation of Railways Act, 1871,' as having met with Accidents caused by the travelling of trains or the movement of vehicles used exclusively upon Railways, and also the number of Servants of Companies reported during the same period under the same section as having met with Accidents in which the movement of vehicles used exclusively upon Railways was not concerned, distinguishing between fatal and non-fatal Accidents, classifying as far as possible the occupations of the Servants of Companies killed and injured, and stating the number of the persons employed by such Companies; and (iii.) in the case of Mines, the number of Accidents in the year ended the 31st day of December 1889 to persons employed in Mines, under 35 and 36 Vic. c. 77, and 50 and 51 Vic., c. 58, of which notice has been received by the Inspectors under Sections 11 and 35 of those Acts respectively distinguishing between fatal and non-fatal Accidents, specifying the class of the Mines in which the Accidents occurred, and the number of persons employed in each class of Mines during the year."—(*Sir William Plowden.*)

ORPHAN HOSPITAL SCHEME, EDINBURGH.

*(12.35.) MR. W. M'LAREN: I am sorry to have to detain the House at this hour; but unfortunately this is the last opportunity I shall have for bringing this scheme before the House, and it becomes law if not rejected before April 11th. The Government, or the majority of its Members, have already voted to-night in favour of altering another scheme of the Commissioners, and I sincerely trust that they will at least leave this an open question, and will not appoint their Whips to act as Tellers against my Motion. This is a matter of great importance to a large number of orphans in Edinburgh, and it is a subject on which the citizens of Edinburgh feel very deeply. It should not be called a hospital, the name is misleading; it is really an orphan home, and one of the best managed institutions in Edinburgh, It is not an old endowment absolutely; it is fully up to the requirements of the present time. It is true the original endowment dates from 150 years ago; but the endowment has gone on increasing, such satisfaction has the management given the people of Edinburgh, that for the last few years the capital has been largely increased by bequests and donations. I may say that in the attempt to upset the present management the Commissioners are opposing the wishes of donors still living who are perfectly satisfied with the present management. Since the Charter was granted in 1742 this has been a distinctly charitable and not an educational institution, in so far as charity and not education has been the standard for admittance; and it is one of the objections to the scheme of the Commissioners that under the new constitution it will become almost entirely an educational institution, the charitable element being almost eliminated. The existing management is conducted on the principle of providing destitute children with a home, giving them also instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other subjects; but the destitution is a necessary element in the recipient of the charity. But under the new scheme it is provided that there shall be an educational examination. The capital value of the institution is £78,000, the building standing at something like £20,000; or I believe it is worth a good deal more now; it cost that amount to build many years ago. The Governors have found, on following out the career of the children, that not more than 1½ per cent. of the children taken care of in this institution have turned out badly in later life. I doubt if any institution can show such an extremely satisfactory result. The institution contains both boys and girls; it is not conducted on the monastic system, it is really like a well-managed home, with all the comforts of home and the training that home life gives a child.

The managers have circulated a statement in which they say the hospital was founded and has been extended solely on charity; it is unique in character; and the only qualification required is that a child is destitute, and therefore a proper object of charity, no inquiry being made into its state of knowledge. The 25th section of the new scheme upsets all this, and provides that the hospital itself shall be closed, and that children only shall be admitted to the foundation when he or she has passed an examination in the standard suitable to the age of the child. Such a qualification will be required from every child before any benefit is received; and when there is a greater number of candidates than there are vacancies, which is almost invariably the case, the managers on selection are to have due regard to the merit of examination. It is perfectly clear that this will throw open the endowment not to the class for which it was intended, but to the children of parents who, having been well to do, were able to give their children a better education, and these, of course, will secure the exhibitions. The desire and intention of the founder, and of all those donors who year by year have added to the endowment, would cease to be respected, the institution will cease to be charitable, and will become educational. There is no need under the Endowments Act that this should be so; the 16th section of that Act provides that in framing schemes the Commissioners, in making selection of those eligible for the benefit of an endowment, may provide for examination or in such other manner as they may determine. Besides, this is not primarily an educational endowment. Another great point of objection is the compulsory closing of the hospital. The whole Governing Body is to be swept away, and a new Governing Body appointed of 15 members, eight to be elected by contributors and seven by the representatives bodies of Edinburgh—the School Board, the Town Council, the Medical Profession, the Legal Profession, and so on. This is a good enough constitution, no doubt; but it provides a new set of Governors under the new scheme, and there is no reason why a new set of Governors should not manage the hospital as they may think fit, to close it or to keep it open, but I object to the compulsory closing of the hospital in five years. The Town Council have petitioned against it, and so have 22,000 of the inhabitants of Edinburgh. A week ago the Governors held a meeting, and a resolution in favour of closing the hospital was only carried by the casting vote of the chairman. Therefore, I may say that half the Governors are in favour of keeping it open, and but for the accidental absence of Sir William Muir the vote would have been in favour of keeping the hospital open. The opinion of this gentleman is entitled to weight, and he has urged his views very strongly. We want to leave this matter optional, and I do not think the Government should object to that. I do not wish to detain the House unnecessarily; it was necessary to make this explanatory statement, and I hope I have been brief. My objection really lies at the root of the scheme, and therefore I propose to vary the terms of the Motion as I have given notice of them, and to ask the House to object to the whole scheme.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from the Scheme for the administration of the Orphan Hospital (Edinburgh)."—(*Mr. Walter M'Laren.*)

*(12.45.) THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I do not desire to canvass the arguments addressed to the House by the hon. Member for Crewe. I do not doubt that the scheme of the Commissioners is one which would have conferred very large educational advantages on a deserving class of persons; but one cannot shut one's eyes to two facts—in the first place, that the scheme constitutes a very material departure from the existing organisation, and probably from the intentions of the founder of the charity; and, on the other hand, that that change has not commanded that general assent which alone would entitle it to absolute Parliamentary confidence. Looking to these facts, I do not propose on the part of the Government to offer

any opposition to the Motion of the hon. Member. I rejoice that he has had the courage of his convictions, and has departed from a Motion which would have embarrassed the charity without pointing out a clear path for its further development. While the Government assent to the Motion, I desire to add that that implies no want of appreciation of the very carefully considered scheme of the Commissioners; but merely, on the whole, that there is a general conclusion arrived at that the existing benefits are greater than those proposed to be conferred by the Commissioners.

*(12.48.) MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): I think the House has reason to complain that at the last moment the hon. Member for Crewe has withdrawn his Motion to amend the scheme, and has moved its rejection. I regret also that the Government are a consenting party to this, if they did not even prompt the change.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I first learned that the hon. Gentleman intended to alter his Motion about an hour ago from the hon. Member himself.

*MR. C. S. PARKER: I apologise for having supposed, if it be not so, that the move originated on the other side of the House. The alacrity with which the right hon. Gentleman welcomed it suggested that idea. But the chief point to which I ask attention is this: the Lord Advocate represents the Education Department, by whom the Commissioners' proposals have been responsibly considered and approved. Yet, on the three last occasions when their schemes have been attacked he has lent his aid to their opponents—twice silently, without a word of explanation, and now this third time not upon the merits, but simply on the ground that in Edinburgh popular opinion is divided. It is true the Town Council and others have petitioned against the scheme as it stands. But only a few years ago, when a Commission, on which I had the honour to serve, looked into the question, public opinion in Edinburgh, and generally in Scotland, ran strong against the system of keeping children together in hospitals, as against boarding them in separate homes; and the old Governing Body of the hospital, representing the subscribers, still support the proposed reform. The majority of them in favour of selling their building is small; but the feeling still prevails that even for orphans some kind of family life is preferable to collecting them within the walls of one large institution. The Governors also urge that, when they can educate the orphans free of cost in public schools, they are no longer justified in going to the expense of a separate teaching staff. I must add a word on the only other point raised by the Motion as entered on the Notice Paper, the mode of selection for admission. The scheme does not enforce competition, it only requires some examination suited to the children's age, and if they have been at school some "due regard" to their good conduct, regular attendance, and satisfactory progress there. The measure of this regard is left to the discretion of the Governors. The children must all be fatherless and "needful." And there is nothing to prevent avowed preference of those who have lost both parents, or who most require help. I think it reasonable and right that in choosing among the needy some preference should be given to the deserving. I cannot, therefore, vote against examination and due regard to proficiency and character. If the hon. Member would confine his Motion to leaving the Governors free to sell or keep their building as they may find best, I would support that. But he seems to have made other terms with his allies; and against entire rejection of the scheme, compelling the Governors to continue the hospital system, I must protest.

*(12.50.) MR. J. A. CAMPBELL: I wish to say, on behalf of the Commissioners, that they do not agree with the view that this Orphan Institution is not a Hospital. They consider that it has all the defects of the hospital system, inasmuch as a large number of children are kept there with very little intercourse with the outside world; and that the objections which

were so forcibly urged against the hospital system by the Commission on Endowed Schools and Hospitals, which reported in 1875, apply to this institution. The recommendation of that Commission was that the children in ordinary hospitals should be boarded out in families, and that in the case of orphans for whom boarding out was not considered suitable, there should be cottage homes provided, but not with so large a number of residents as would interfere with the domestic character of the home. The Commission felt that this orphan hospital was not a home, and that what was desirable for these orphans was that they should be placed in cottage homes, in so far as that could be carried out. I wish to say so much in defence of the scheme of the Commissioners.

(12.53.) **Mr. HALDANE**: I wish to call the attention of the House to the extraordinary position taken up by Her Majesty's Government. This is the third of these schemes which has been rejected by them. Only a few minutes ago we were discussing another scheme prepared by Commissioners acting under an Act of Parliament for which Her Majesty's present Government at all events are constructively responsible, and carrying out a policy which they have sanctioned, and the Lord Advocate, without a single word and without any warning, went into the other Lobby and threw overboard the scheme of the Commission. We are aware that the head of the Commission is a Conservative nobleman, who is not altogether popular in all sections of his Party; but I recognise him as a man of great ability, and a man for whose opinion I have the greatest respect, as I have also for that of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. J. Campbell). But I do think we have cause to complain that the decision of Lord Balfour of Burleigh and of the hon. Gentleman should have been overthrown on the last occasion without any word or without any warning, and on this occasion by a more general statement, which, if it comes to anything at all, goes to impugn the principle which underlies the Act of Parliament. I do not know what occult influences have been at work with the Lord Advocate, or what outside pressure has been brought to bear upon him; but this I do know: that it is a very extraordinary circumstance that in this House the work of one of the best Commissions that has sat in Scotland for many years past should be treated as it has been treated by the Government.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from the Scheme for the administration of the Orphan Hospital (Edinburgh).

To be presented by Privy Councillors.

RIGHTS OF WAY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Buchanan, Bill to confer on County Councils in Scotland the power of maintaining and protecting Rights of Way, and otherwise to amend the Law relating to Rights of Way in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Asher, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Shiress Will, Mr. Munro Ferguson, Mr. Birrell, Mr. Esslemont, and Mr. Caldwell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 215.]

RIGHTS OF WAY (SCOTLAND) (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Charles Dalrymple, Bill to enable County Councils in Scotland on a report by the sheriff to sue actions of Right of Way, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Dalrymple, Mr. James Campbell, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Mr. McLagan, and Mr. Mark Stewart.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 216.]

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) (NAMES OF LANDOWNERS.)

Return presented,—relative thereto [ordered 31st March; *Mr. John Morley*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 115.]

EDUCATION (PRIMARY INSTRUCTION IN PARIS).

Return presented,—of Letter from Sir B. Samuelson, Baronet, M.P., concerning Public Primary Instruction in Paris [Address 31st March; *Sir William Hart Dyke*]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 1st April, 1890.

The House met at Two of the clock.

QUESTIONS.

PARCEL POST.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will endeavour to re-arrange the scale of charges for Parcel Post so that the maximum charge shall be one penny per pound after the first pound, with a minimum charge of 3d. for each parcel; and for what period has the present Parcel Post arrangement with the Railway Companies been concluded?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): I should, of course, be very glad to arrange for any modification of the Parcel Post likely to be beneficial to the public and not injurious to the revenue. The tendency, however, of the hon. Member's proposal would be to increase the number of small parcels carried at scarcely remunerative rates, which, perhaps, he has not fully considered. The present Parcel Post arrangement with the Railway Companies has been concluded for 21 years from the 1st August, 1883.

POST CARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that a strong desire exists among those having business or other correspondence with the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State, to be supplied with post-cards for those countries; whether these countries named are the only civilised ones with which there is no communication by post-card; and whether he has taken any steps to supply this want of the public?

*MR. RAIKES: I have long recognised the convenience that would be afforded to the public by extending the post card system to the Cape of Good Hope, and have been engaged in negotiations with the Cape Post Office with the object of establishing this mode of communication. An arrangement on the subject has now been made, and as soon as a date has been fixed for commencing the system, I shall have the pleasure of announcing it to the public, in the usual manner. I shall endeavour to make similar arrangements as regards Natal and the other South African States.

MILITARY PENSIONS.

MR. SAMUEL HOARE (Norwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether James Marshall, late 23rd Regiment, was discharged from Netley Hospital on 22nd August, 1865, suffering from the effects of asthenia, on a pension of 7d. per diem; whether, owing to an error on the part of the medical officer in entering his illness as asthma instead of asthenia, James Marshall received no pension from 22nd August, 1867, until 29th June, 1886, when his pension was restored, with two years' back pay in addition; whether the said James Marshall is not entitled to 17 years' pension; and whether the circumstances of the case will be re-considered?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): James Marshall was discharged on August 22, 1865, on account of asthenia on a pension of 7d. a day for 18 months, which expired on June 11, 1867, when his case was considered, and the renewal of his pension refused. Nothing was heard of his case for 16 years; but in 1883 he again applied for a renewal of his temporary pension, which was refused. In 1886 he made a further appeal, and on re-consideration it was discovered that the medical officers had assumed that his discharge was on account of asthma. He was re-examined for asthenia, and was granted a pension for life, but without arrears. Several appeals have been received asking for arrears of pension for the 19 years from 1867 to 1886, and the utmost allowed under the Regulations, namely, two years', has been granted. During a portion of this time Marshall was in a lunatic asylum, so that had he been in receipt of a pension it would have been paid to the authorities for his support, and would not have benefited his family. Although, therefore, I cannot give him any further arrears of pension, I will consider whether we might not be justified in somewhat increasing his pension for the remainder of his life.

IRELAND—RAILWAY BETWEEN GALWAY AND CLIFDEN.

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland if he is aware of the circumstances under which the Grand Jury of Galway, at the Spring Assizes just held, made a presentment in favour of a railway between Galway and Clifden on either a broad or narrow guage system upon a Report from the Commissioners of the Board of Works, Ireland, the Government to advance in the one case £244,600, and in the other case £219,000, the country guaranteeing only £1,000 in aid of such railway; whether he is aware of the Minute recorded by the Grand Jury of Galway, expressing its regret that the negotiations entered into between five of the members of the Grand Jury as a Committee and the Chairman and Directors of the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland fell through; whether he is aware that the Grand Jury, in consequence of the advice of Mr. Barton, C.E., stated that they felt bound to pass a perfectly open presentment, but that they also wished to express their earnest desire that the promoters and the Government might come to some arrangement which would secure the maintenance and working of the railway by the Midland Great Western Railway Company; whether he is aware that the Chairman and Directors of the Midland Great Western Railway Company had expressed themselves unreservedly to the Grand Jury, that having regard to the defective mode in which the projected line had been laid, and notwithstanding the modifications suggested and allowed by Mr. Barton and embodied in the Commissioners' Report, that their company would never undertake the working and maintenance thereof; and whether Her Majesty's Government would, under the foregoing circumstances, direct an independent inquiry as to the projected undertakings for giving railway accommodation from Galway to Clifden, under the supervision of the Board of Trade, before payment of any public money is authorised to be made for the construction of railways in Galway?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, University of Dublin): The facts are as stated in the first four paragraphs of the question. With regard to the suggestion made by my hon. Friend in the last paragraph, Her Majesty's Government do not see that any advantage would be derived through holding an additional inquiry, the former inquiries in the matter having been of the most exhaustive character.

RAILWAY FROM RATHMULLAN TO FALCARRAGH.

DR. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether application has been made to the Lord Lieutenant to schedule under the Light Railways Act of 1889 a line of railway from Rathmullan to Falcarragh, *vid* Milford, County Donegal, and whether it is the intention of the Government to do so; whether it differs from the route recommended by the Royal Commission in 1887; whether it would be the extension of any existing line; whether Rathmullan and Milford are in any sense congested districts; and whether he is aware that the Grand Jury of County Donegal, at last Assizes, condemned that portion of the line between Falcarragh and Milford?

MR. MADDEN: I am informed that no such application has been made to the Lord Lieutenant.

THE ESTATE OF MR. H. B. O'SULLIVAN.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to the Report of the professional valuer appointed by the Land Commissioners, as reported in *Cork Herald*, to inquire into the security offered by the holdings on the estate of Mr. H. B. O'Sullivan at Rahonna and Kilnamartyra, County Cork, for the repayment of the advance, from which it appears that the purchase money offered by the tenants was excessive, and that the combined interests of the tenants and landlord were not deemed by the valuer security for the money; whether it is a fact that the terms of purchase agreed upon by the tenants would have brought down the yearly payments to nearly 50 per cent. under the present rents; whether it is true that the rental in question was determined and enforced by the Receiver Department of the Chancery Court, and that many tenants were evicted by the Court in default of payment of rack rents; and whether it is his intention to take any notice of the Report of the professional valuer?

Mr. MADDEN: I have not seen the newspaper statement referred to; but the Land Commissioners inform me that any such statement would be wholly unauthorised, inasmuch as the Reports of their Inspectors under the Purchase of Land Acts are confidential documents. It is a fact that the Commissioners, not being satisfied with the security, refused the applications referred to, and that the terms of the purchase would have brought down the yearly payments considerably. The Chief Receiver's Department inform me that the rental of the estate was not determined there, but was furnished to the Department in the ordinary way when the management of the estate was taken over, and that one tenant only has been actually evicted.

Dr. TANNER: Is it not the fact, as stated in the second paragraph of the question, that the terms of purchase agreed upon by the tenants would have brought down the yearly payments to nearly 50 per cent. under the present rents?

Mr. MADDEN: I have already stated that the rents would have been considerably brought down.

Dr. TANNER: Is it not the fact that these tenants have been obliged to pay, again and again, these excessive sums of money, and that many tenants have been evicted in default of the payment of rack-rents?

Mr. MADDEN: One tenant only was evicted. I presume that the others paid the rents.

Mr. McDERMOTT.

Mr. THOMAS GILL (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland what have been the costs incurred by the Crown in the various remands of Mr. McDermott, of Clanricarde, including the cost of transporting and escorting him on each occasion from the gaol to the locality in which the secret court before which he has been summoned has been held?

Mr. MADDEN: The Constabulary authorities report that the expenses incurred in the matter in question amount to about £45.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): This Gentleman has been 10 times remanded for refusing to give evidence in secret, and I wish to ask the Government whether during the recess they will not allow him to give evidence in open court in order that he may be able to protect himself against defamation?

Mr. MADDEN: This is an inquiry under the Explosives Act of 1883. The answer given by Mr. McDermott has invariably been that he could give evidence, but that he refused to do so. In my opinion, it would be extremely undesirable in such a case to interfere with the discretionary powers of the Magistrates who are conducting the inquiry. The man does not state that he has no evidence to give, but that he will not give it, as the law requires him to give it.

Mr. SEXTON: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not see that if he were to give evidence in secret he would be exposed to imputations hereafter?

Mr. MADDEN: The Act of 1882 extends to every part of the United Kingdom, and the mode of conducting the inquiry must be left to the discretion of the Magistrates who conduct it.

THE CASE OF CAPTAIN RYE.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether Mr. C. J. Harold, one of the Justices who were trying the case against Captain Rye, at Crookstown, County Cork, has been, and still is, employed by Captain Rye as clerk in connection with the lime-kilns, or agent; and, if so, whether an intimation will be conveyed to him not to take any further part in the case in which there are four other Magistrates adjudicating?

Mr. MADDEN: The Lord Chancellor's Secretary informs me that it is understood that some years ago Mr. Harold was connected with Captain Rye in the management of some quarries, but that it is not known whether that connection still exists. Inquiries on this point are being made.

Dr. TANNER: So much being admitted, will some pressure, in the interests of justice, be brought to bear on Mr. Harold, in order to prevent him from taking any further part in adjudicating upon the case of Captain Rye?

Mr. MADDEN: I think that the interests of justice may be safely left in the hands of the Lord Chancellor, before whom the matter has come.

Dr. TANNER: Is it not the fact that the decision of the two Removable Magistrates has already been overridden by the local Justices, one of whom is, or has been, in Captain Rye's employment?

[No answer was returned.]

FOREIGN OFFICE CONTRACTS.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he has seen the answer of the Decorators' Society to his statement in reference to the repair of furniture in the Foreign Office; and what steps he has taken to inquire into the truth of their allegations?

*The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, University of Dublin): I have forwarded the answer of the Decorators' Society referred to in the question to Messrs. Jenks and Wood for their observations. I have not yet had an answer, as the partner in the firm who dealt with the particular subject has not returned to London, but I have no doubt I shall soon have the answer.

EDINBURGH BOTANIC GARDENS.

Mr. LAWSON: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware that 10,000 persons visited the Botanic Gardens, Houses, and Museum, at Edinburgh, the first Sunday on which they were open to the public, and that since then they have been much used on that day; and if the conduct of the people is reported to have been orderly and satisfactory?

*Mr. PLUNKET: I am informed that the attendance at the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh averaged about 10,000 on each Sunday when the weather was favourable during the first two months after the Gardens were open on Sundays, they have been much used since, principally by the artizan classes, and I believe that no complaint has been made of any misconduct on the part of the visitors.

THE YEOMANRY CAVALRY.

Mr. LAWSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, and if so when, he intends to make a statement as to what part the Yeomanry Cavalry are to take in the second line of defence; whether their position will correspond to that of the Volunteer Infantry and Artillery; and, if not, can he explain the reason?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: There are a good many difficulties in the way of assigning to the Yeomanry, with the same definiteness as in the case of the Volunteers, the exact position which they will have to fill on mobilisation, and I was unwilling to make any partial statement on the subject. But a scheme is being worked out which will fully recognise the value of the Yeomanry in the defence of the country, and I shall be glad to make it public as soon as it is finally settled.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): How soon will it be that we shall have this information?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: I would rather not fix a date.

Dr. TANNER: Can the right hon. Gentleman fix an approximate time?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: No; there are a good many details involved.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have formally invited the attendance of delegates from Newfoundland to discuss the Fishery Question; and, if not, whether the Government will cable such an invitation to Newfoundland, in view of the great excitement in that Colony?

Dr. TANNER: I have received a cablegram from Newfoundland upon this subject, and I think it would save both time and trouble to the House and the right hon. Gentleman if I tell him the effect of it.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is not asking a question.

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have formally and repeatedly invited the attendance of the Premier of Newfoundland to discuss this question, and have no doubt that he will come to England as soon as the state of Parliamentary business in the Colony permits. They do not think it desirable to telegraph anything further at present. They will, of course, be glad to receive other delegates also if the Colony so desires, but they do not think they should propose it. May I take this opportunity of correcting an error in a report which I have seen of my answer upon this subject yesterday? I am made to say that the *modus vivendi* with France had not received the assent of "Newfoundland in its original form." What I said was "in its final form," as is obvious from the context.

Dr. TANNER: Has the consent of the Legislature of Newfoundland been obtained to the *modus vivendi* arranged between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of France, in reference to the lobster canning industry on the west coast of Newfoundland; and has any attempt been made to obtain the consent of the Legislature before the fishing season opens?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I have repeatedly answered the first part of the hon. Member's question, namely, that no despatch has yet been received from Newfoundland, giving the consent of the Legislature to a *modus vivendi* for arranging the difficulty. So far as the last question of the hon. Member is concerned it is surely one for the Government of Newfoundland.

THE SCOTCH SCHOOL BOARDS.

Mr. SHIRESS WILL (Montrose Burghs): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been directed to the effect of Section 29 of "The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889," upon the franchise for School Board purposes in Scotland; and whether, in the case of service franchise occupiers, the entries of annual value now for the first time required to be made in the Valuation Roll by Section 29 of the Act of 1889 do not satisfy the requirements of Schedule B of "The Education (Scotland) Act, 1872," so as to qualify as electors for School Board purposes all service franchise occupiers whose names are entered on the Valuation Roll as occupiers of lands and heritages of the annual value of not less than £4?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): In my opinion, the persons referred to in the question of the hon. and learned Gentleman are qualified as electors for School Board purposes. As the Valuation Roll is now made up their names are entered as inhabitant occupiers of lands and heritages of the annual value of not less than £4; and I do not think that the fact that they are described as "inhabitant occupiers," and not simply "occupiers," can be held to derogate from what is otherwise a clear qualification.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Mr. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture when it will be convenient for him and the President of the Local Government Board to receive the deputation upon the subject of tuberculosis in cattle?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Chaplin, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): In reply to the hon. Member, I may say that after communication with my right hon. Friend I have intimated to the gentlemen who desire to wait upon us that we shall be happy to receive them at the Board of Agriculture on Thursday, April 24, at half-past 1, if that day is quite convenient to them.

THE MORFA PIT.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the alleged extreme narrowness of the shaft in the Morfa Pit, as stated in the *Daily Graphic* recently; whether it is true that it would have been possible to rescue the horses now left to starve in No. 9 level of the said pit, had the shaft been of an ordinary width and the cage of sufficient size; and whether it would be possible to insert a special clause in the Mines Act rendering it illegal for horses to be used in pits wherein there are no means of saving them in cases of explosion?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): No, Sir. My attention has not been called to the structure of the Morfa Pit shaft. Until I receive the Report of the Inspector and of the legal representative of the Home Office at the inquest, I am not in a position to answer the question in the second paragraph. I will consider the suggestion in the last paragraph of the question.

THE FACTORY ACTS—VAUGHAN & Co., CARDIFF.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the workers in the steam laundries of Messrs. Vaughan and Company, of Cardiff, are under the Factory Acts; if so, how does it come that fines are exacted by this firm; and if Messrs Vaughan and Company's works are under the Factory Acts how is it that the Factory Inspector for the district has not brought this matter under the notice of the proper authorities?

*MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I understand that these laundries are under the Factory Acts. I have not at present any information as to what fines are exacted by the firm. I will make inquiry into the matter.

FACTORY ACTS—GREAT WESTERN COTTON WORKS, BRISTOL.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has had any Reports from the Factory Inspectors of the Bristol District in regard to the engine having been repeatedly run overtime at the Great Western Cotton Works in Bristol; if he would make inquiries in order to avert a strike amongst the female operatives in those works; whether he is aware that last autumn an agreement was entered into by the Directors of the Works that the engine would be stopped at 8.30 a.m. to 9 a.m. for breakfast; from 1 to 2 p.m. for dinner; and finally at 5.30 evening, as the operatives complain that in every instance this agreement is not complied with; can he explain why these hours, which are those stipulated by Act of Parliament, have been broken; whether complaints have reached him that on Friday, 21st of March, the Chief Inspector and Sub-Inspector called at the factory, but confined their inspection to walking through two weaving sheds, and that, as soon as the Inspectors left, steam was put on, and the engine ran overtime; if the Inspector notified the manager of his visit; and, if so, why; and why, with the excessive heat and dust that prevails in these works, no preparation has been made for the application of "The Cotton Cloth Factories Act, 1889," which came into operation 1st March, 1890?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I have not yet been placed in possession of the necessary information to enable me to answer all the questions of fact. I have received no Reports as to the engine running overtime, and no complaints as to the visits of the Chief Inspector. The Chief Inspector has been, and is, visiting several towns in connection with the carrying out of the provisions of the Cotton Cloth Factories Act, and, amongst other places, has paid a special visit to Bristol. Inquiries will be made as to the statements in the hon. Member's question

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TELEPHONE.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether all or any of the Government Offices in London are connected with the telephone erected for the use of Members within the House of Commons; and, if not, whether, considering the great convenience it would be to Members for making inquiries and appointments, he will have connections established?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Although telephonic communication with the Government Offices might be of some convenience to Members, I am afraid I cannot say the same with respect to Ministers. To them it would be very inconvenient. Suppose, for example, a Member wished to communicate with the Treasury upon some matter of business. There would probably be involved a communication from the Treasury to myself, and I would in all probability be in the House. Inasmuch, therefore, as the convenience would only be available to Members during the sitting of the House, and all the Government Offices are represented in the House, it would be more convenient that a communication, if urgent, should be made direct to the Member of the Government responsible for the Office with which communication is desired. All communications on Government business made to a Government Department should be subject to the authority and supervision of the head of that Department.

In reply to a further question by Mr. P. O'BRIEN,

*MR. JACKSON said: My own personal view is that a clerk communicating upon Government business with a Government Department should only be subject to the supervision and authority of the head of that Department. No information would be obtained through the telephone in the absence of the head of the Department.

DR. TANNER: Might it not be absolutely beneficial to the Minister himself——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member cannot argue the matter now.

DR. TANNER: I will raise the question on a future occasion.

PRISON TREATMENT OF GEORGE HARRISON.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has seen the report of an interview between a representative of the Press and Mr. George Harrison, lately released from Millbank Prison, in which Mr. Harrison alleges that while in Chatham Prison he was four times punished by solitary confinement on a charge of refusing to work when he was unable to work through illness; that he was on these occasions placed in a cold, badly-lighted cell, the smell of which was horrible; and that on one occasion after release from the punishment cell, and while suffering from the effects of the extra punishment, he was struck on the head by an official; whether the Prison Rules require that the medical officer's sanction must be obtained before a prisoner is placed in solitary confinement or any extra punishment, and whether reduction of dietary or increase of labour are inflicted; has this rule been observed in Mr. Harrison's case; and whether he will cause a full inquiry to be made into the allegations and state result? I have also to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has seen the statements of Mr. George Harrison, lately released from Millbank, to a representative of the Press, that two prisoners named Gallagher and Hawkins, confined in Millbank, are only allowed a quarter of an hour's exercise daily; whether this statement is true; and, if so, why are the prisoners named deprived of the two hours' exercise daily prescribed by the Prison Rules; whether he has seen the further statements of Mr. Harrison, namely, that—

> "The food and general treatment of prisoners in Millbank has been so bad that several cases of insubordination occurred."
>
> "There was one man in a dying condition, over whom a pail of water was thrown as a remedy, with the result that he had to be removed to the infirmary and his parents sent for, so critical became his condition."
>
> "On another occasion, in the cell next to mine, I heard two officers go in and beat a prisoner unmercifully with their staves. . . . He is either in the infirmary or dead. I stopped in my cell about two hours after that, but never heard him move."
>
> "They (the insubordinate prisoners) were scourged on the bare back, and sometimes put in irons, according to the orders of the Director, before whom the Governor took them;"

and, whether he will cause an investigation to be made into those allegations, and state the result? I have further to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has seen the statement of Mr. George Harrison, that, when he was imprisoned in Pentonville Prison, the Chaplain, addressing him, said—

> "You are like some of the rest. You want to turn the world upside down. We've got a lot more like you";

whether he has seen the further allegations against the Chaplain of Chatham, namely—

> "He did not come near me till I sent for him, after three months had gone, and, when he did come, his words were, what will men not do to make themselves popular before their fellow men";

whether he will cause an investigation into the truth of these allegations; whether he will give the names of the Chaplains of Pentonville and Chatham respectively; and whether any communication has been addressed to them in connection with these matters?

MR. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I have also to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the paragraph published in the *Star* newspaper of the 29th ultimo, in which George Harrison, who was released on the morning of that day upon a ticket-of-leave, is made to speak of gross ill-treatment suffered by the prisoners at Chatham, and to use the following words:—

> "I will give you an instance of some of the treatment. There was one man in a dying condition, over whom a pail of water was thrown as a remedy, with the result that he had to be removed to the infirmary, and his parents sent for, so critical became his condition . . . . On another occasion, in the cell next to mine, I heard two officers go in and beat a prisoner unmercifully with their staves. It was something terrible, for I could hear that it was his head they were beating. I have not seen him since. He is either in the infirmary or dead. I stopped in my cell about two hours after that, but I never heard him move";

whether there is any, and, if so, what, truth in the statements contained in such paragraph; and whether there is any power to revoke the licence of a prisoner released on ticket-of-leave, in the event of his causing the publication of accusations against warders and other prison officials, charging them with murder or attempted murder, which, upon inquiry, may be found to be wholly untrue?

MR. MATTHEWS: I will answer the three questions of the hon. Member and that of my hon. Friend the Member for North Camberwell (Mr. J. Kelly) at the same time. With regard to the allegations as to Harrison's treatment, as far as I have been able to ascertain in the short time allowed to me he was punished by close confinement four times, but in each case was certified as fit to work and to receive punishment by the medical officer. Shortly after his arrival at Chatham he complained to the medical officer that the work was too hard, and he was exempted from spade work and heavy lifting, and thenceforward put to light labour only. The cell in which he underwent punishment was not cold or badly lighted; the temperature was 60 degrees; ample provision is made for the ventilation. The story about his being struck on the head the Governor states to be a pure invention. With regard to the charges made against the Chaplains I have made inquiry, but have not had time to receive answers. No complaint was made at the time to the Visiting Director at Chatham. The Rev. Mr. Wheeler is Chaplain at Chatham. The Rev. Mr. Stocker is Chaplain at Pentonville. As to the statement that Gallagher and Hawkins had not more than a quarter of an hour's exercise, I presume the reference is to Callan and Harkins. The rule is that every prisoner during his first nine months is allowed an hour's exercise daily, which these men had. The Governor of Chatham Prison denies absolutely the story as to a pail of water being thrown over a dying man. As to insubordination caused by bad food and general treatment, and as to a man being unmercifully beaten by two officers in his cell, I invite the hon. Members who give publicity to such statements to supply the dates and particulars relating to them. Corporal punishment can be ordered only by a Director after proof on oath of very serious breaches of discipline, and must be inflicted in the presence of the Governor and medical officer. The rules also require that dietary punishment shall not be inflicted on a prisoner, and he shall not be placed in a punishment cell unless certified by the medical officer to be in a fit condition of health to undergo such punishment. These rules were observed in Harrison's case. There is power to revoke a licence at the pleasure of Her Majesty; but though I should deplore the conduct of this licence-holder, if he has been spreading in the Press charges which I believe to be absolutely without foundation, yet I cannot say that on this account I should be justified in advising the revocation of his licence.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN: I cannot give the dates. I have only asked questions in reference to what I read in the papers. All I ask of the right hon. Gentleman is that he will institute some independent inquiry.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am quite prepared to make an inquiry into the matter, and the character of the inquiry will depend upon the information I receive.

CUSTOMS—DUTIES ON VIOLINS.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he would state under what authority a violin (consigned from Paris to Mr. D. Lawrie, of Glasgow, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras), valued at £800, dated 1696, and purporting to be the work of Antonius Stradivarius, of Cremona, was on the 25th March detained by the Customs Authorities at Dover; if it is true, as stated by the Station Master at Dover in explanation, that its detention was due to the fact that in consequence of violins, represented as the work of classic makers, having been imported, consignees of such instruments are now required to state whether the imported article is for private use or sale; and, if for sale, to prove the accuracy of the date and name on the label before the instruments are given up by the Customs; whether the violin will be delivered to Mr. Lawrie without further delay; whether the fact of an old violin having passed the Customs is to be taken as a Government certificate of the genuineness of its date and signature; and if the regulation is intended to protect purchasers of violins against imposition, why an exception is made in the case of violins declared to be for private use, but which may subsequently be sold?

*Mr. JACKSON: The question appeared on the Paper only this morning; but I have been able to ascertain that this violin was imported at Dover as described by the hon. Member. It was declared to be of the value of £80, and it was detained. On the 28th of March a letter was received from Mr. David Lawrie stating that the violin was his own property, and was intended for his own use. Upon that statement directions were given for its delivery to him, and it has, I believe, been delivered.

Dr. CAMERON: Is it the fact that if a violin is declared to be for sale it is stopped unless the signature on it can be verified?

*Mr. JACKSON: I have not been able to obtain information in answer to this question.

COLLISION IN THE BRISTOL CHANNEL.

Sir HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, having regard to the loss of life which has occurred, he will direct an inquiry into the cause of collision on the 12th instant, in the Bristol Channel, between the steamer *Grantully* and the trawling smack *Holme Bay*, of Lowestoft, as the result of which was that the five or six hands on board the smack were lost?

Sir SAVILE CROSSLEY (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the serious loss of life which occurred through the collision, he will order an inquiry to be held into the facts of the case?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): As all those on board the smack perished, and no evidence on their behalf has been available, I have not thought that any useful purpose would be served by ordering an official inquiry. But if the hon. Members are in a position to furnish me with any evidence I shall be quite ready to re-consider the question.

PARAFFIN.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the terms of an agreement between Thompson and Bedford Company, Limited, as representing American producers of paraffin, on the one part, and the Scottish Mineral Oil Association on the other part, limiting the production and fixing the price, and imposing other restrictions on the sale of the materials necessary for the manufacture of candles within the United Kingdom, and establishing a differential charge of "not less than ½d. per lb." against all candlemakers who are not members of the Candlemakers' Association and do not maintain minimum prices of 4s. 4d. and 4s. 6d. per dozen pounds, and also providing that

> "The minimum prices herein agreed to are only binding until 30th June, after which they may be raised but not lowered;"

whether he is aware that all the leading candlemakers of the United Kingdom, with one exception, have been coerced into submission to the conditions of this agreement; and whether, having regard to the judgment of Lord Esher in the recent case of the "Mogul Steamship Company *v.* M'Grigor," he will bring the matter under the notice of the Public Prosecutor, in order that the opinion of the Law Officers may be taken as to whether the facts would justify a prosecution as for an indictable public wrong?

MR. MATTHEWS: This is a question which ought to be put to my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General.

THE EDUCATION CODE.

MR. POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education when the instructions to Inspectors will be distributed, and when the Code will be printed and circulated in such a form as to show separately all articles cancelled, modified, or established since the last edition, in accordance with custom and the provisions both of the Code now in force and of the New Code? I also beg to ask when the New Code of Regulations will come into force?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I have already stated that the instructions to Inspectors will be distributed as soon as possible; the changes in the Code are so extensive that it would not serve any useful purpose, while enormously increasing the bulk of the document, to print it in the form suggested; the plan observed in the year 1882 has therefore been followed. In reply to the second question of my hon. Friend, I cannot do better than refer him to the terms of the Minute prefixed to the Code, showing that it will practically come into operation on the 1st of September.

*MR. POWELL: When will the Code become law?

SIR W. HART DYKE: It will become law when it has been duly discussed in this House, and perhaps amended.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: When will the instructions to the Inspectors be issued?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I have already said that I hope they will be in the hands of Members next week. They will be published in the form of a Parliamentary Paper.

THE KITCHEN COMMITTEE.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chairman of the Kitchen Committee how much money the Committee will save by putting the waiters on half pay at Easter time; and whether he would consider the advisability of consulting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to making provision for the amount necessary to give the waiters full pay during the adjournment of the House?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. SIDNEY HERBERT, Croydon): The saving would be about £58. The circumstances would not warrant any application to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject.

In reply to Mr. P. O'BRIEN,

MR. SIDNEY HERBERT said: According to the present arrangements it would be impossible to add very much to the expense of the staff without altering the tariff.

DR. TANNER: Does the hon. Gentleman mean to say that a sufficient sum of money is not now received for the extremely bad catering we get?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE CROXTON VILLAGE SCHOOL.

MR. NEWNES (Cambridge, E., Newmarket): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the Croxton Village School, which is in receipt of a Government grant, was refused to the Liberal candidate for West Cambridgeshire on 18th February, on the ground that it could not be let for political purposes, and on the 12th March was let, or lent, for the annual meeting of the Croxton Conservative Club; and whether he will take any steps to prevent the Government aided schools being used in the interests of one Party and to the exclusion of another?

SIR W. HART DYKE: It is not the duty of the Department to determine for what purposes managers or owners of schools may allow them to be used out of the ordinary school hours. I have no means of bringing pressure to bear one way or the other upon these owners of schools; but I have already expressed an opinion in this House that schools should be lent to both Parties, because the more the views of hon. Members opposite are disseminated the better for the political future of our own friends.

MR. W. REDMOND: Is it not the fact that these schoolrooms are almost universally lent for Conservative demonstrations and refused when asked for by the Liberals?

SIR W. HART DYKE: No, Sir; that is very much denied.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON TOWN HOLDINGS.

MR. LAWSON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Select Committee on Town Holdings will be renominated to take evidence and report on the rating of ground rents and values?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I understand that the names will be handed in in the course of the evening.

VACCINATION RETURNS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: My attention has been called to the Returns of Vaccination that have been laid on the Table. May I ask how it is that several counties have been absolutely omitted from them?

MR. MATTHEWS: I must ask for notice of the question.

IRELAND—THE CLONGOREY HOLDINGS.

MR. SEXTON: I gave notice of my intention to call the attention of the House to this case to-day; but I beg to postpone any further action until after the Easter recess.

TAXATION OF LAND AND BUILDINGS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND IN BRITISH COLONIES.

Address for—

"Return showing—

1. Taxation on land:
    (a.) The per-centage on the annual value which the rate levied amounts to;
    (b.) The total amount raised, the totals for local and National purposes being stated separately;
    (c.) The per-centage which the amount raised by taxation of land bears to the total taxation;
2. Taxation of buildings:
    (a.) The per-centage on the annual value which the rate levied amounts to;
    (b.) The total amount raised, the totals for local and National purposes being stated separately;
    (c) The per-centage which the amount raised by taxation of buildings bears to the total taxation."—(*Mr. Provand.*)

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Proceedings on Supply have precedence at the Evening Sitting this day, and also to-morrow; and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to the Sittings of the House this day and to-morrow."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

(2.56.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I think the right hon. Gentleman should have given some reasons for the Motion. Yesterday, the right hon. Gentleman will remember, was the first day on which the House was asked to consider the Civil Service Estimates, and that being so any hon. Member had a right to call attention to subjects before the Speaker left the Chair. The right hon. Gentleman said he expected to pass the whole of the first Class of Civil Service Estimates. Now, with all respect to the right hon. Gentleman, looking at the precedents, that was a preposterous expectation. We might have gone on with the preliminary discussion until 12 o'clock; but as we understood that the right hon. Gentleman wanted to have some money, we took the unusual course of allowing you, Sir, to leave the Chair at 8 or half-past 8 o'clock. It must not be forgotten that the matter was put off until the very last day before the holidays. Everyone knows that the Votes on the Royal Palaces and on the Royal Parks invariably gave rise to a very considerable amount of discussion, as various Members desire to make comments upon them. The right hon. Gentleman got those two Votes, and he was fortunate in getting them. On the first Vote there was a good deal of discussion, but upon the second there was hardly any. The right hon. Gentleman also got a Vote on Account for two months; and if he will point out one or two Votes in connection with which there are contracts we will be ready to assent to them. But I think it is unfair to us and to hon. Gentlemen opposite to call upon us to pass the whole of the first Class of the Civil Service Estimates before we leave for the vacation. A good many Gentlemen, not dreaming that the right hon. Gentleman would ask for these Votes, have gone away. If it is the duty of the right hon. Gentleman to get money, it is the duty of hon. Members to criticise the Votes. Let there be a *modus vivendi.* The next Vote is a very controversial Vote.

An hon. MEMBER: What is it?

MR. LABOUCHERE: It is a Vote of £195,000 for the Houses of Parliament. If the right hon. Gentleman will consent to take a couple of Votes which will give him enough money, and will then agree to the adjournment of the House, the whole thing can be settled; but to ask us to pass the whole of these Votes in a perfunctory manner is to ask us to abrogate our duties as an Opposition. I warn the right hon. Gentleman that if he persists in taking this extraordinary course the proceedings are likely to be somewhat lengthy. There is only one instance in which Class I. of the Civil Service Estimates was taken in one night, and it was when the Government brought in their Local Government Bill. There was a feeling on this side of the House that we should be able to turn out right hon. Gentlemen opposite upon that measure. We were deceived, and it was no encouragement to induce us to act in the same manner again. I ask the Government to take now that which has been the usual course on other occasions, and not to keep hon. Members here when they want to be elsewhere.

*(3.0.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I am in the recollection of the House when I state that from time to time during the last week I urged upon the House the necessity which the Government were under of asking for Class I. before the Adjournment. The grounds upon which we asked for those Votes were that there were contracts involved, and, unless the Votes were sanctioned, the most favourable opportunity for building operations would be lost, and serious inconvenience would be caused to the public interest. These contracts extend to all the Votes, and it is on that ground that I adhere to the intimation which I gave with regard to them. Therefore, though it may be the duty of hon. Members to criticise the Votes, it is equally the duty of the Government to endeavour to conduct the business of the House with due regard to the convenience of the House and the public interest, even though in doing so they may trench upon the holidays which hon. Members have a right to expect. Some of the discussions last night might have been curtailed without injury to the public interest. The Government are most anxious to meet the views of every Member of the House, so far as may be consistent with their obligations to the public.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to interrupt? I think we may come to an arrangement if the right hon. Gentleman will leave out Votes No. 6 (Art and Science Buildings) and No. 7 (the Diplomatic and Consular Buildings), which I do not think are pressing. There are a great many Gentlemen who desire to discuss questions connected with them. [*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!"] If the right hon. Gentleman will do that I believe we shall be able to come to an arrangement.

*MR. W. H. SMITH : I am exceedingly sorry that I am not able to comply with the suggestion, which the hon. Gentleman deems a reasonable proposal. The views of hon. Members might be expressed shortly ; I am sure they will be expressed shortly on this side of the House.

MR. LABOUCHERE : There are Members who wish to speak who are not here.

*MR. W. H. SMITH : I cannot postpone the Votes. Hon. Gentlemen have had ample notice that these Votes would be asked for before the Adjournment. We must ask for Votes down to No. 13 (Rates on Government Property), postponing Vote 14 (for Public Works and Buildings), before I can move the Adjournment of the House.

DR. TANNER : Are the Government in earnest in pushing forward to-day the Contagious Diseases (Animals) (Pleuro-Pneumonia) Bill ?

(3.5.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central) : I think that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman in regard to Votes which involve building contracts is a very reasonable one. The Diplomatic and Consular Buildings Vote, however, is scarcely subject to that observation. This Vote includes the building of an agency house at Cairo, a subject which has frequently given rise to discussion. It is important that the contracts referring to buildings in England should be entered into at once ; but as it is not so important in the case of the diplomatic and consular buildings I would suggest that the right hon. Gentleman should postpone that Vote.

*MR. W. H. SMITH : I can only speak again by the indulgence of the House, but I wish to state that there is a special reason connected with the Cairo item in the Vote which obliges the Government to ask for the decision of the House upon it. There is a contract for the land on which the Agency House is to be erected, and this contract only lasts until March 31. The contract has been extended for a few days, in order to give the Government an opportunity of obtaining the decision of the House on the question. If the Vote is postponed the contract lapses altogether, and there would be no site available upon which to erect a building.

DR. CAMERON : I am afraid that when the two sides of the House get to loggerheads the public business makes very little progress. It is quite evident that the Government can, if they choose, force these Estimates through the House with very little discussion. But if they take the Committee stage before Easter, there is still the Report stage to follow. Will the right hon. Gentleman promise to afford an opportunity of discussing the Votes on Report ?

*MR. W. H. SMITH : Well, I think that is a reasonable proposal, and I will endeavour, as far as possible, to meet the views of the hon. Gentleman as to any particular Vote on which discussion may be desired.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE : I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not take the discussion on the Report of the Naval Vote.

*MR. W. H. SMITH : I agree to that.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) : I think we want a more definite assurance as to the opportunity of discussing the Votes on Report.

*(3.10.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): To my mind this question of dealing with the public money is the most important question which the House of Commons has to consider. The manner in which Votes of money are rushed through the House appears to me to be simply scandalous. A great deal of time is occupied by the House in discussing other matters, but it does not give nearly sufficient time to the consideration of spending money. If Supply is rushed through in the hasty way now proposed, there will be no opportunity afforded to hon. Members of ventilating grievances, which, in the interests of the people, we ought to have. It is not merely a question for hon. Members. It is a question for the country, and the people of the country demand that all questions concerning the expenditure of money should be properly discussed and considered. I object to anything like a threat on the part of the right hon. Gentleman that hon. Members will lose their holidays if these Votes are not passed. This is neither a fair nor a proper argument to use towards the House. It may be all very well to treat the Irish Members in this way, but

there is no one strong enough in this country to treat with contempt and also with impunity Members representing English constituencies. I would recommend the right hon. Gentleman to answer the questions which are put to him, and not to compel hon. Members to ask the same questions twice over. Let them tell us what they want in regard to these building contracts and we shall be glad to comply with their wishes. The Government must remember that they cannot conceal these things; they can be discussed either now or on Report; and I insist upon proper answers being given to hon. Members by the right hon. Gentleman. I trust that in future hon. Members will take more interest in questions connected with the expenditure of the money of the people.

DR. CAMERON: Supposing the right hon. Gentleman obtains the Votes he desires in a reasonable time this afternoon, will he then move the Adjournment of the House at once?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Last night I indicated that the Government would ask the House to pass the Committee stage of the South Indian Railway Purchase Bill and the Second Reading of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill. I believe that those Bills will take but a very short time.

Question put, and agreed to.

RAILWAYS, &C., RETURN TICKETS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Morton, Bill to enable passengers in railway trains and on steamboats, &c., to make use of return tickets for twelve months after the date of issue, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Morton, Mr. Causton, Dr. Clark, Mr. Lloyd Morgan, and Dr. Tanner.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 217.]

BANKRUPTCY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. James Campbell, Bill to consolidate and amend the Law of Bankruptcy in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. James Campbell, Mr. Thomas Sutherland, and Mr. Baird.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 218.]

SHOP HOURS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Provand, Bill to amend the Law relating to the employment of women and young persons in shops, &c., ordered to be brought in by Mr. Provand, Mr. Whitley, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Channing, and Mr. Samuel Smith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 219.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1890-91.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS I.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £165,767, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, for expenditure in respect of Public Buildings in Great Britain, including the Houses of Parliament."

(3.15.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I wish to call attention to Item C., the rents of houses. There is a large number of houses that are rented as public offices, at the same time that there are a considerable number of public sites that are unoccupied and have been unoccupied for years. I notice that the First Naval Lord of the Admiralty has a residence in Queen Anne's Gate at a rental of £700 a year. I could never understand why the First Naval Lord should have a residence, seeing he has a salary of £2,000; it is out of all reason. The Board of Trade Offices might be erected on a vacant site, instead of rents being paid for the present ramshackle buildings. I hope the First Commissioner of Works will, as rapidly as possible, get rid of the hired houses, and to do his best to provide buildings on sites already purchased.

*(3.20.) THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): For a long time past various plans have been tried by which the bad habit of the housing of the public establishments in hired premises might be got rid of. In recent times the India Office, the Local Government Board, the Home Office, the Foreign Office, and others have been properly housed. The Board of Works are at present engaged in erecting new Admiralty buildings; the War Office will probably be undertaken next, and when those two Departments are provided for, there will be comparatively little room for complaint with regard to the use of hired premises.

(3.7.) Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W): I would wish to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the great want of accommodation in the Offices of the Board of Trade. When a deputation attends there is no room into which they can be shown without the presence of the clerks. The offices are a disgrace to the country.

*(3.8.) Mr. PLUNKET: I agree that the accomodation at the Board of Trade is unsatisfactory, and I think it ought to be improved as soon as possible, with due regard to priority of claims, on the part of others of the Government Departments.

*(3.10.) Mr. MORTON: I want to ask a question on Item C. I notice an item of £2,800 for Dover House, and I see, "Stables occupied by the First Lord of the Admiralty." I should like to know what the First Lord of the Admiralty wants with stables. Are they occupied by the celebrated Horse Marines. I think we are entitled to know something about it, because it looks a large sum. Then there is an item on page 22 for the supply of water to various public offices by private companies. I want to know whether that supply is regulated by meter, and what is the cost per 1,000 gallons. On page 23 I see that carpets, &c., cost £2,300; then there is £3,050 for various articles—baskets, glass, and china ware. Are these articles supplied by public tender? So far as I am concerned, I shall not be satisfied until the Government—I do not care of what Party—adopts a system of publicly inviting tenders, a system adopted by the smallest Municipal Authorities throughout the country. I think we ought not to enter into contracts for works costing, say, £200, without publicly advertising for tenders. I do hope we shall have a more satisfactory answer this afternoon upon this point than we had yesterday.

Dr. TANNER: There are some matters in connection with this Vote to which I think attention might be called. Some of the larger items are in connection with the sanitary improvement of some of the offices, where a perfectly new scheme has been adopted. We are asked to vote on account a further sum of £5,000, and I ask for what practical purpose is the money to be expended? Take the University of London. Of course, everybody taking an interest in the higher education of the country necessarily feels a deep interest in the education provided by this University, which I believe to be one of the best in the country. Still, I think it right to call attention to the large expenditure of £9,500 which is proposed for the purpose of providing additional accommodation for the students coming up for examination. I want to know whether this is in consequence of an increase in the number of students requiring to be examined, and whether the proposal is one that has had the sanction of the Governing Body? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Commissioner of Works will perhaps excuse my putting these questions, and will probably allow me to say further that I am glad to find that money is needed for providing increased accommodation for the University of London. I hope that this will tend to set at rest any question that might be raised in regard to the Royal University of Ireland that will come later on. I may add that I am pleased to see that the expenditure required for the Royal Courts of Justice has this year been reduced. There is one other point to which I wish to direct attention. Yesterday evening I made reference to the item put down in connection with rent, insurance, and tithe rent-charge in respect of our public buildings, and I desire so say that when the Estimates for next year are prepared, I hope these items will be placed under separate headings. As it is, it is impossible for us to know what insurance money is paid by the country in connection with our numerous valuable buildings and institutions. I yesterday called attention to the small sum payable for the insurance of the Royal Palaces. Taking up the list of the public buildings of Great Britain, I find that there is a sum of £4,709 11s. 3d. to be paid under the three headings I have named, which is an increase of over £1,000 on the sum payable last year. This being so, I think it would be advisable to put the amounts payable under separate headings, so that the country may know exactly how much it has to pay for each. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will deem it necessary to offer some explanation with regard to these matters.

*(3.40.) MR. PLUNKET: In answer to the hon. Member for Peterborough, I have to state that the supply of water to the Public Offices is by meter, the price being from sixpence to ninepence per 1,000 gallons. As to the stables, certain of the Public Offices carry with them the right of stabling; but there being no stables at the Admiralty, stables have been provided at Dover House for the First Lord of the Admiralty. With regard to furniture, it is not possible to take contracts for all the furnishing which has to be provided; but whenever the quantity of furniture required exceeds, say, £15 or £20, competitive tenders are invited. Any firm of standing may be placed on the list of those who are invited to tender. With regard to the London University, there is a great increase of students, which has made the present accommodation inadequate. If the hon. Gentleman complains that there are certain firms not on the list, I will see that they are included.

*MR. MORTON: No, Sir. All I wish is that the Government should adopt the system of publicly inviting tenders, though I am quite aware that it could not be carried out in all cases.

(3.42.) MR. CREMER: I should be glad to know who the firms really are? A great many people would be glad to be enlightened.

*(3.43.) MR. PLUNKET: As I have said before, if any hon. Gentleman chooses to submit a firm, I shall be glad to put it on the list. The names I have here are Holland & Sons, Johnston, Norman & Co., Jenks & Wood, Hampton & Sons, Hughes & Co., F. Coote, and occasionally, also Gillows, Howard, Oetzmann, as well as a few others.

(3.44.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the further accommodation will be available for the examinations by the Civil Service Commissioners, who have been very much inconvenienced by not having a suitable place for holding their examinations?

Dr. Tanner

*(3.45.) MR. PLUNKET: The suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman is a very pertinent one, and is well worthy consideration, inasmuch as the present accommodation for these examinations is not only insufficient but expensive.

*(3.45.) MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say that the same rule will be applied to buildings and repairs of buildings as is to be applied to furniture; and are we tounderstand that, where the repairs are of a serious amount, tenders will be invited by advertisement?

*MR. PLUNKET: Yes.

(3.46.) DR. TANNER: Will it not be advisable to settle this matter by attaching to the Estimates a list showing the various contracts entered into under the different headings. This would save a good deal of trouble, and would protect the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Commissioner of Works from any insinuation or innuendo as to things not being square.

*(3.47.) MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I have a few observations to make in moving the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £500 on account of the restoration of Westminster Hall. The chief point I desire to raise is one that relates to the total want of proper accommodation for carriages and carriage horses in Palace Yard. There is a cave or cavern at one corner of the yard, which is used for the shelter of horses and carriages, but in regard to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks) has said that it is intended not for carriages, but for saddle horses. It would, no doubt, be a convenient place for carriages; but for the sudden and abrupt descent from the yard above, and although it is said not to be intended for carriages, I may state that I myself saw within it when I left the House last night no fewer than five carriages. For my part, I am unable to understand why saddle horses should have preference over the carriages and carriage horses which are usually waiting in Palace Yard at night. The precipitous descent into the new cave or cavern might have been easily avoided by the architect, and the fact that it exists is the fault of the Government

Officers. I am glad to see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford in his place, because I know that he, as a former Commissioner of Works, has gone into the matter, and I submit to the House that it is quite a new thing not to have a carriage shed in connection with this House. I have been a Member of this House for a great many years, and I cannot remember the time when there was not a shelter for Members' carriages. Why such provision has not been made in connection with the new work it puzzles my comprehension to understand. The architect, by the exercise of a very small amount of ingenuity, might have provided such a shed; but instead of doing so, he has built a walk right across the entrance to the new buildings, and to the north of that wall there is a large platform of ground which is of no use whatever to Members of this House. I cannot see why that wall should not be removed and a proper carriage shelter erected there. Having thus brought this matter before the right hon. Gentleman with as little circumlocution as possible, I shall be glad to hear what he has to say in regard to it. On the last occasion of the discussion of these Estimates, I endeavoured to impress on the right hon. Gentleman the extraordinary character of the stone parapet at the southern side of Westminster Hall, near Sir Charles Barry's Staircase. It is totally out of harmony with the original design, and I pointed out to my right right hon. Friend that it is totally useless for any practical purpose, for anyone wanting to enter the south-west door might approach it by steps through the old iron gates. In conclusion, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £500.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item N, for the restoration of Westminster Hall, be reduced by £500."—(*Mr. Cavendish Bentinck.*)

*(3.57.) Mr. PLUNKET: I have considered the matter of the staircase in Westminster Hall to which my right hon. Friend has referred. I have taken advice upon the subject, and I now propose to make some alterations. I propose to take the present moulded coping off the wall, and reduce the height of the latter by 1 ft. 6 in.; to continue the coping which was fixed by Sir Charles Barry in lieu of that removed; fix a guard rail on the latter coping, and re-fix the iron gates and railing to correspond with those on the opposite side. I have had a Report made to me to the effect that the use for the shelter of carriages of the covered place intended only for horses to stand in is very dangerous, and certainly the building was not planned to be used for any such purpose. I considered the question whether it would be possible to erect in the centre of Palace Yard any considerable shelter for carriages, and I came to the conclusion that it would not be possible to do so without disfiguring the appearance of the yard.

(4.3.) Mr. CAUSTON: I think the use to which the new rooms outside Westminster Hall has been put fully confirms the views expressed by many of us who, in 1885, opposed the erection of the new buildings. There has evidently been great difficulty on the part of the Government in finding a use for them at all. I would point out also that the divisions and the bookcases which have been put up in the different rooms are entirely out of harmony with the rest of the elaborate design of the building. I would further draw attention to the fact that the fireplaces and grates are simply ornaments; they cannot be used. Neither coal nor gas can be burnt in them, for the simple reason that there are no chimneys. The health of the officers who use the rooms will, I am afraid, suffer in consequence of this state of things. In consequence of the arrangements adopted for heating the atmosphere is unbearable, and I believe the officials have to spend a great part of the time which should be devoted to work in walking up and down Westminster Hall for the purpose of getting fresh air. The large room does not seem to have been applied to any purpose, and I should like the right hon. Gentleman to say what he proposes to do with it? I know the right hon. Gentleman is not himself for the building, but I believe it to be practically useless.

*(4.7.) Mr. PLUNKET: I cannot in the least agree with the view taken by the hon. Member as to the utility of the rooms. It seems to me that by the

placing of new Smoking Room, Reading Room, and Ladies Dining Room at the disposal of Members during the present Session — I think much to their satisfaction — by the removal of certain officers to the other side of Westminster Hall, a very great addition has been made to the comfort and convenience of the House. I admit that some complaints were made at first as to the heating of the newly-erected rooms, but they seemed to be due to the differences of opinion existing among the occupants as to the temperature which ought to be kept up. I have since put up partitions between the various offices, and I believe the officials are now as happy as possible. It is true there are fireplaces which cannot be used; but as the rooms are perfectly well warmed and ventilated by other means, I do not think that is a very serious complaint. It is the case that I am not responsible for the new building. I wish I were, for in my opinion it is a very handsome and stately addition to the old Hall.

(4.10.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I think I must have been misunderstood on this question. I certainly never said that the erection at the side of Westminster Hall was intended as a shelter for carriages. On the contrary, I always said it was intended only for horses. That was fully explained when the scheme was being discussed. It replaces the shed which stood close by formerly, and which was certainly only intended for sheltering horses. It very often happens that 30 or 40 carriages are in the yard at the same time, and it would be impossible to make provision for sheltering the whole of them. A proposal was made to erect a carriage shelter on the other side of the yard, but it was rejected on the ground that it could not be carried out without spoiling the artistic appearance of the Houses of Parliament.

*(4.12.) MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: The reply given by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Plunket) as to carriages is most unsatisfactory. We know quite well, after many years' experience, that the old shed accommodation in Palace Yard was amply sufficient for the protection of the coachmen and carriages who come down. All I ask is that equal accommodation should be given now. It seems to me ridiculous

that when you are spending this vast sum of money on the new buildings and upon the land in front of them you cannot provide some kind of shelter for servants and carriages of Members during the winter months. I should like to know why the zig-zag wall has been erected on the north side. It is certainly no ornament.

*MR. PLUNKET: It was in the plans, and was approved by the Committee.

*(4.15.) MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: The fact of its having been in the plans does not make it of any use, and I think that every decision the Committee arrived at ought to be condemned. This is not a question of ornamentation, but one of usefulness and almost of humanity to the servants and to the poor dumb animals brought down here night after night. Last night, at midnight, I found five carriages in the new buildings, and I am informed by the constables in attendance that as many as 10 or 12 have been in there at one time. Does not this show in the clearest way in the world that some such accommodation is necessary? I suppose the right hon. Gentleman will see the new shelter is to be handed over entirely to the horses of telegraph messengers and to the bicycles and tricycles one sees stored away there. I think Members of this House ought to be considered by the right hon. Gentleman before the telegraph boys and messengers. Members of this House are those who vote the money, attending here long hours, and I think they are entitled to some consideration. There is no doubt if the right hon. Gentleman would consult Mr. Taylor, of his own Office, who is a gentleman of ability, some means could be devised for giving shelter to carriages. All I would ask is that Members of Parliament who use private carriages and often have to take them home, as I have, late at night, shall have some consideration given to them. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford can say that this question was before the Parliamentary Committee. I should hardly think that such an important question could have been omitted. However that may be, I think the question now is a serious one, and that, although there is not a large attendance of Mem-

bers, we ought to take a vote of the House about it. Members may come in and outvote us without having heard the discussion, but we must take the chance of that.

(4.18.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I rather agree with the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. At present, as the right hon. Gentleman says, the shelter is used for carriages. The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner has said that it is dangerous to use it for that purpose, and, that being so, I presume he will forbid such use being made of it. Under these circumstances, and in view of the fact that we have not yet arrived at that democratic age when we all use omnibuses or walk down to the House, but have horses and coachmen who are liable to be affected by the inclemency of the weather when the House sits late, I hope the First Commissioner of Works will make inquiries to see if a change cannot be made without injury to the architectural beauties of this building—to see if some shelter cannot be put in Palace Yard or somewhere else where carriages which have to wait for Members can be protected from the weather.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I will undertake to give the matter most careful consideration.

*(4.20.) Dr. FARQUHARSON: I must say I am rather sceptical as to the extreme satisfaction of the clerks with the new rooms adjoining Westminster Hall. Though I have heard no complaint, I fail to see how they can be satisfied with the atmospheric conditions under which they live—with the manner in which the rooms are lighted and heated. In the case of one of the rooms it is said that the clerk occupying it likes it, but whether he likes it or not he ought not to be permitted to remain in it, for it is stuffy. It cannot be healthy for any one to remain in it any length of time. Will the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works tell us what is to be done with the large room called the Conference Room? It is a room of splendid proportions, and so handsome that it is a pity it cannot be used for some practical purpose. I should deprecate its being used for a Grand Committee Room for the reason that it is too great a distance from this House, and it would overtax the energies of even the most agile to get from that room to the Lobbies here during the short time the Division bell rings. Members who are old and infirm and not fitted for the athletic performance of running helter-skelter from the Committee Room to the House, traversing a tortuous flight of stairs on the way, would find it impossible to discharge their Parliamentary duties if required, to sit on a Grand Committee in this room. I hope, therefore, we shall not be put to the inconvenience and possible danger of having to use this room as a Grand Committee Room. As to the new shelter for horses and carriages, I think it is equally dangerous for both. I do not think it can be safe for horses to come down that very steep and narrow incline, especially in wet and slippery weather. Whilst inspecting the place to-day, I noticed one or two horses there, and saw a young man suddenly dash down amongst them on a bicycle. Such a thing as that, I should think, must be very inconvenient and very dangerous to horses. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be possible, without interfering with the architectural proportions of the building, to make some sort of descent down, which horses could be driven with safety?

(4.23.) Mr. CREMER: Before the right hon. Gentleman replies, I would like to put a questien to him with reference to a matter that I raised in the House the other day—though if he has not yet had time to consider it, I will not press for a reply. I desire to know why Members are not allowed to visit, and to escort their friends through, the Painted Chamber and the Buckingham Chamber in the other House? Why should it be necessary to obtain the escort of a Peer in order to visit these places? Then, again, the right hon. Gentleman undertook to ascertain why we are precluded from visiting the crypt, and if he is now in a position to enlighten us on the subject I shall be glad.

(4.25.) Dr. TANNER: I desire to draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the ventilation of this House—a subject which I had occasion to deal with five years ago. On certain occasions, when, for instance, we are expecting a great Division, the atmosphere gets extremely stuffy, and laden with carbonic acid gas. The draught coming up from the chamber below through the floor is always the same. It cannot be graduated and made to fit the particular circumstances of the time; therefore, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether something cannot be done in the matter? If it is possible to effect a cure it will be greatly to the advantage of the Members of the House, and even more so to the officials who remain here throughout the sittings. The draught could be increased by enlarging the apertures for the escape of foul air overhead. I think the mode of introducing fresh air from below requires alteration. It comes up through the floor, and, therefore, of necessity, brings up with it small particles of dust, which get into the lungs of hon. Members, causing discomfort and danger to health. These are small matters, but they deserve to be gone into. I should also like to urge upon the right hon. Gentleman the desirability of restoring the frescoes up stairs near Sir Charles Barry's statue, which are in a most dilapidated condition.

(4.28.) MR. CREMER: [*Cries of* "Divide."] I trust the Committee will bear with me for a moment, as it is seldom I waste the time of the House. I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he would not place a few trees or shrubs and flowers on the terrace outside the House, which at present has a most cold and barren appearance?

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: As I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say he will inquire into the matter to which I draw his attention, I will not press my Amendment to a Division.

*(4.30.) MR. PLUNKET: The suggestions made by the hon. Member opposite (Dr. Tanner) some years ago with the view of excluding fogs from this House were, as the Committee knows, adopted with beneficial results. I shall be very glad to confer with him and the officials who have charge of the ventilation as to whether it is possible to do anything more to improve the ventilation of the House. As to the large room on the other side of Westminster Hall, I am afraid it is too remote to be used by a Committee, unless it is arranged that its sittings shall not overlap those of the House; but in every other respect the room is well adapted for the purposes of a Grand Committee. I have made some inquiries respecting the picture galleries in the House of Lords, and, as regards the Painted Chamber, access can be gained to it only through the Division Lobbies and the writing-room of the House of Lords, so that it is not reasonable to expect that it should be accessible, even to the Members of this House, when the other House is sitting. I will make further inquiry as to whether additional facilities can be given to Members to visit the room when the House of Lords is not sitting. With reference to the Buckingham Chamber, I am still in correspondence with the Lord Chamberlain. I have not yet received an answer to the inquiry I made respecting the admission of Members to the Crypt. As to the frescoes on the staircase, I have taken the best advice I could obtain, and have been assured that they are no longer within the reach of remedial art; and no one is able to suggest a plan by which decay can be arrested.

(4.36.) MR. CREMER: I am not so unreasonable as to imagine that Members of this House should be admitted as of right to the Lobbies and the writing-room of the House of Lords when that House is sitting. But I would point out that the House of Lords does not meet until half-past 4 o'clock, and that it frequently happens that Members of this House are desirous of visiting the Painted Chamber and the Buckingham Chamber between the hours of 2 and half-past 4. Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries to ascertain whether Members of this House will be admitted to those Chambers during the hours I have referred to, and, in fact, during the time the House of Lords is not sitting?

*(4.37.) MR. PLUNKET: The public are admitted in the usual way when the House of Lords is not sitting on Saturdays, and on Monday and Tuesday in Easter week, and at other times, but I will make inquiries to ascertain whether there is any objection to admitting hon. Members of this House whenever the House of Lords is not sitting.

MR. CREMER: Will the right hon. Gentleman reply as to the shrubs.

*Mr. PLUNKET: The question has been considered. I have spoken to a large number of people about it and the general opinion is that to put shrubs or flowers on the river terrace would not be an adornment, but rather a disfigurement.

(4.38.) Dr. FARQUHARSON: Is it not the fact that the restrictions upon hon. Gentlemen visiting the House of Lords are of recent date? A few years ago we were free to visit the House of Lords at any time the House was not sitting.

*(4.38.) Mr. PLUNKET: I will inquire.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

*Mr. MORTON: I see an item of £200 here for the supply of oil for the lamps used in the Committee Rooms. Why is there so much oil used here? I have been looking about but have been unable to find many lamps in use. I also find that the Resident Engineer has a salary of £250, rising by £5 annual increments to £300; but he is here accredited with £400. How does that happen? I notice that he receives other sums under other heads but there is nothing to account for the increase of salary. Would it not be well in future to put the whole sum paid to this gentleman down in one item instead of dividing it in this way? I am aware that payments are sometimes put down in this way in order that more than the maximum salary can be paid, and, perhaps, that has been done in this case. If so, I must say I do not agree with the system.

*(4.39.) Mr. PLUNKET: Up to the present year the salary of the Assistant Engineer was as stated by the hon. Member, but Dr. Percy, the eminent Engineer of the House of Commons, unfortunately died last autumn, and we took the opportunity of re-modelling the Department. Instead of filling up the vacancy at the old salary of £600 a year we added £100 to the salary of the Assistant Engineer, giving him £400 instead of £300, and conferred the whole responsibility on that gentleman. As to the consumption of oil, oil lamps are used in Committee Rooms and in the residences attached to the House, but the consumption of oil will be reduced as the electric light is extended, as it will be during the Easter and Whitsuntide holidays.

Vote agreed to.

2. £21,000, to complete the sum for Admiralty, Extension of Buildings.

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: There has been such a long delay in commencing the extension that I was in hopes the rumour was true that the Government had determined to re-consider the matter, and I regret to learn from this Vote that it is intended to persist in the extension scheme. Two years ago we had the assurance of architects that the work would be completed in two and a half years. Now, two years have passed and nothing has been done beyond digging the foundations. I presume no contracts has been entered into for the new building. I am opposed to the scheme because it will prevent for any period within present contemplation the bringing of the Admiralty and the War Office under one roof. That defect has been prominently brought before our notice by the Report of the Army and Navy Royal Commission. The whole question seems to me to turn on the expediency of bringing the naval and military Departments into harmony with each other. One of the proposals of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) was that these two Departments should be placed under the control of one Secretary of State. Though that proposal was rejected by the Royal Commission it is obvions that the Commissioners regarded it as of enormous importance that the two Departments should be brought into harmonious working, and I understand that they have a plan for effecting that. I believe myself there would be no mode in which the two departments could be brought into greater harmony with one another than by putting them under the same roof. Until quite recently that has always been the view of every high Authority who has considered the matter. In time of peace the adoption of such a scheme would involve economy whilst in time of war it would involve a large increase of efficiency. My right hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), who has presided over the Admiralty and the War Office, and who was at the head of the War Office at the time when this country was involved in war with Egypt, stated in evidence before the Committee that in time of peace it was important that the two Departments should be close together, whilst in time of war it was absolutely essential. He also said that the separation of the two Departments was a cause of weakness and might be the cause of disaster. Within the past two or three years a somewhat adverse opinion has been given on the point by the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton) and the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith). I quite admit the high authority of the First Lord of the Treasury in such matters, but at all events he has not had experience of the advantages of such relations between the two Departments in time of war. I believe some proposal has been considered for putting the War Office on the other side of Whitehall on the site of what is known as Carington House; but if that proposal were carried out the War Office would be on the other side of the street, and it would involve great additional cost. It was with the view of bringing the two Departments together that the Spring Gardens site was purchased seven or eight years ago. I am not now recommending that Messrs. Jennings' plan should be revived, as that scheme, in my opinion, is dead.

(4.50.) Mr. COURTNEY retired and the Chair was taken by Sir J. GORST.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE continued: At the same time some scheme might be adopted which would carry out the plan I am advocating. Looking at the question from an economic and an artistic point of view, I must again challenge my right hon. Friend, as I did two years ago, to say whether he could bring forward any single architect of influence or importance who will recommend the present proposal either upon architectural or economic grounds. The proposal is to add two wings to the existing Admiralty at a cost of something like £195,000. The existing Admiralty, which is, I believe, about 150 years old, certainly would not cost more than £80,000 or £90,000 to re-erect. You are going to add to an old building, which is

certainly very deficient as an office, and which is not a lofty building as compared with offices in other parts of London, an extension which will cost £195,000, and from the necessity of maintaining the old building you are practically going to extend all its main defects to the two wings. From an economic point of view, that does not seem to be a wise course. As to the artistic point of view, I believe every Authority who has looked at the plans has condemned them. They have been condemned by the Institute of Architects, and I believe I am right in saying that the professional officers of the Office of Works itself have not recommended them to the Government, and that those who are entrusted with the erection of the buildings do not consider the scheme a wise or sound one. I believe myself that even now, at the eleventh hour, it would be wise not to proceed further with the scheme, but to invite suggestions for utilising the site, which was bought at very considerable cost, for the erection of a great building which would accommodate both the Admiralty and the War Office. At present the War Office is spread about in numerous separate buildings. I believe there are as many as nine or ten of them, in different parts of London. The existing War Office site cannot be made available for new buildings, and it will, therefore, be absolutely necessary at some future time to purchase a new site at a very considerable outlay of money. The most serious defect of the present scheme is the impossibility of the two great Departments ever being brought into continuity. On the whole, I most seriously suggest to the right hon. Gentleman whether even now it would not be a wise course to postpone further progress with the building, and consider whether it would not be possible to erect upon the Spring Gardens site a building—not according to the original plan of Messrs. Leeming—which will be suitable both for the Admiralty and the War Office. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not think, in the remarks I have made, that I have any personal feeling in the matter, arising from the rejection of the scheme which I originally recommended to the House. On the contrary, I shall be most willing to support the right hon. Gentleman in any scheme which, on the whole, commends itself to me as one likely to attain the object I have set forth. I do not think the present scheme will prove effective from an administrative point of view. I believe that, architecturally, it will be a failure, and that in the long run it will land the country in greater expenditure.

*(5.2.) Mr. PLUNKET: Certainly any suggestion on such a subject coming from the right hon. Gentleman is worthy of very respectful and careful consideration; but when he asks us, not at the eleventh hour, as he says, but at half-past 12 to reject the presentscheme he can hardly expect us to assent. I do not suppose that it is desired that I should follow the right hon. Gentleman through all the arguments which he has put forward on several previous occasions, and which have been answered over and over again. The whole question was very carefully considered by a strong and important Committee who rejected the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. It then became our duty to do something, and accordingly in 1887 were entrusted to Messrs. Leeming the duty of preparing fresh plans. It is true Messrs. Leeming preferred their own original plan, but for the purpose of carrying out the recommendations of the Committee they do entirely approve of their present plan. That plan was adopted in principle by the House in 1887, when it voted the sum of £500 for the preliminary expenses which it entailed. In the following year the plans when prepared were exhibited in the Tea-room, and in the same year the House voted £5,000 on account of the cost of carrying them out. In these circumstances, I think that it is impossible for the right hon. Gentleman to ask the Committee to go back in the matter. In December last the Government authorised the expenditure of £21,000 upon the construction of the foundations of the new buildings, and I cannot believe that the right hon. Gentleman is serious when he asks the Government now to stay their hands in the matter.

*(5.6.) Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: I do not wish to do any injustice to Messrs. Leeming. I have no doubt they consider they are making the very best of the job which has been entrusted to them, and that they are as a matter of fact doing the work as well as it can be done.

Vote agreed to.

3. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £52,522, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for Expenditure in respect of Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, viz., County Courts, Metropolitan Police Courts, and Sheriff Court Houses, Scotland."

(5.8.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I am afraid I shall be obliged to put the Committee to the trouble of a Division on this Vote. The Committee will see that it includes a very large sum for the Metropolitan Police Court Buildings. It is the old question whether these Metropolitan Police Courts ought to be paid for by London or by the Imperial Exchequer. I have raised the point when Liberal and Conservative Ministries were in power, and before London got its County Council, and the reply I always got was, wait until London gets a County Council or some sort of Municipality. The very last year before the County Council was established the point was especially impressed upon the House, that as soon as the County Council was set up a new arrangement would be made. We have got a County Council, but we still have to pay for the Metropolitan Police Courts. It may be urged that in some sense some of the expenditure is Imperial. A little of the business at Bow Street is connected with extradition treaties and so on, and no doubt to that small extent the expenditure may be regarded as Imperial. Many of us represent towns in different parts of the country, and we know that our constituents have to pay for their own Police Courts. Why, in the name of goodness, should we be called upon to pay for our own and also for the Police Courts of the richest place in the entire country? Under the circumstances, and seeing that neither Liberal or Conservative Governments have kept faith in the pledges given, I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by £18,000, which will allow a little for the Imperial work at Bow Street.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Items G to K, for Metropolitan Police Court Buildings, be reduced by £18,000."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

(5.13.) At this point Mr. COURTNEY returned to the Chair.

*MR. PLUNKET: Of course I am not going to enter into the general question whether or not these buildings ought to be maintained by the country at large or by the Metropolis itself. That is a question, no doubt, for discussion. The answer I have to give to the hon. Member is simply this, that I am an humble builder who must follow instructions, and the 17th and 18th Vic. cap. 94, authorises and commands me to provide these buildings.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No doubt the right hon. Gentleman is bound by Act of Parliament to provide these buildings, but if my Motion is carried the Parliament that gave him that authority will relieve him of it.

(5.16.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): The question is not as small as the Motion seems to indicate, and I desire to state the reason why I intend to vote against the proposed reduction. I am not prepared to vote for the transfer to the County Council of any expenditure on Metropolitan Police Courts or the Police, now incurred by this House, until the whole question of the control of the Metropolitan Police has been settled in the only way it can be settled, and that is by handing over that control to the County Council.

*(5.18.) MR. MORTON: I do not propose to discuss the question as to who should pay this money, although it is very hard that the people in the provinces should have to pay for their own Police Courts, and that the London Courts should be paid for out of the general purse. What I want to know, however, is whether the works in connection with the Wandsworth Police Court are to be completed. I understand that a site has been purchased. Is the building to be proceeded with at once?

(5.20.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 51; Noes 130.—(Div. List, No. 43.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Labouchere

4. £18,062, to complete the sum for Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain.

*MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I desire to know whether the First Commissioner of Works can assure us that the New National Portrait Gallery is secure against fire, and also that the building is proof against damp. With regard to South Kensington, many friends of the Government expressed great regret two or three years ago that the Government could not do more for that institution, and especially for the building devoted to educational purposes. It is with great gratification, however, that they now notice that the Government heve adopted a more liberal policy. There is a Vote this year for £100,000 for South Kensington. I trust that, having so well begun, and having occupied sr worthy a position in connection with education, the Government will proceed further in the same direction. The point I am coming to now is in reference to South Kensington Museum. I think it is greatly to be regretted that that magnificent building, South Kensington Museum, should be left incomplete; that while some portions of the building are just cause of pride, other portions remain in that miserable condition in which they have stood for many years. In the course of last Session I called attention to one particular part of the building, the shed that adjoins the main building, the roof of which was in a hopelessly dilapidated state. Last autumn when I visited the museum and saw beautiful specimens of art from various parts of the country, which were being prepared for exhibition, so unsound was the state of the roof, that large portions of the floor and tables were marked out as being not safe to receive the drawings. Notwithstanding all the care thus exercised many drawings were seriously injured by wet. I cannot conceive anything more mortifying than for students to prepare drawings with much diligence and skill, and then to find them so little cared for or appreciated that they are injured in exhibition. Another point of more importance is the danger to the Museum itself. This building to which I have alluded is of such a character that it is full of inflammable material, and it might well take fire from negligence that could scarcely be called culpable. I do not think there is any warehouse in the country that is liable to such risk as this shed, to which I called attention last year. If a fire should break out the building must inevitably be destroyed, and a great body of fire will be called into existence to the extreme danger of the rest of the buildings. Although in theory the Museum itself is fireproof, we know what a great difference there is between theory and fact in these matters, and how buildings which are calculated to be fireproof are apt to succumb to the influence of fire by reason of some unsuspected crack or flaw in the ironwork, which makes your precautions vain, and so your building is destroyed and your collection perishes. I cannot conceive anything more discreditable to the administration of this country than to allow such a risk to the South Kensington Museum for the sake of the paltry saving over this shed. Other parts of the building are in a not more satisfactory condition; but this shed calls for special condemnation as a discredit to British art and an alarming danger to the Museum. I will not occupy time by going into the history of the South Kensington Museum, but I may be permitted to call attention to the fact that so long as seven years ago, when the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) was in charge of the Department of Works, he placed on the Votes a sum of £5,000 as the beginning of the completion of what was then known as the South West Wing. He withdrew that Vote under pressure of debate in the early part of the Session, but he said he would replace it on the Estimates in the course of the Session. This was a distinct promise in 1883, but from that time until now no steps whatever have been taken, so far as I know. I feel great reluctance to occupy the time of the Committee now, for I know how valuable time is. I will content myself with saying that the condition of these buildings is a discredit to this country, and the continued postponement of the necessary work shows an uncertainty of policy which is a condemnation of our administration. I do hope that ere long fresh proposals will be made to the House towards completing the buildings, making them worthy of their purpose, and that, as a preliminary step, this shed may be taken in hand and rebuilt, so that we may have a place wherein to exhibit in safety those specimens of art sent up by our young students all over the country.

*(5.40.) Mr. PLUNKET: Certainly my hon. Friend has no need to make any apology for the remarks he has addressed to us on a subject most interesting and important. I think that in a few words I can satisfy him. In the first place I can assure him that the building in which the National Portrait Gallery collection is housed at Bethnal Green is as carefully provided with every possible appliance to prevent danger from fire as any building can possibly be. I need scarcely say that in the new building about to be erected for the collection at the back of the National Gallery every care that experience and science can suggest for the exhibition, lighting, and security of the pictures will be taken. My hon. Friend has alluded to some imperfections in the roof of the South Kensington building and to damage caused to pictures there; but this damage, I think, was caused by the neglect of some of the attendants, who left the sky-light windows open, and allowed the rain to enter. Whatever imperfections in that roof there were have been set to rights. As to the larger question, my hon. Friend is aware that a few weeks ago we obtained, by a Supplementary Estimates, £100,000 for effectually improving the housing of the science and art collection at South Kensington, and I think my hon. Friend will accept that as an earnest of the goodwill of the present Government to carry out the objects he has at heart. We have undertaken the purchase of a large piece of land, and hope to make, if I may use the expression, a really good job of the whole thing for the future. No more time than is necessary will be occupied in the preparation of plans that will take the utmost advantage of the great acquisition of space secured, and my hon. Friend may rest assured that we are prepared to put the buildings on a proper and worthy footing.

(5.42.) Dr. TANNER: There is one point to which I should like to call attention. By dint of continual questioning a certain amount of concession has been obtained. There was a great amount of protestation offered at the time we were urging that the British Museum should be thrown open in the evening, and much was said about the additional expense that would be incurred. I am glad to see that these forebodings have not been fulfilled. The British Museum is now opened in the evening, and I notice that under sub-head D, for maintenance and repairs, there is a decrease of £10. There is, I think, sufficient encouragement in this to justify our urging that the Government should go a step further. The Trustees have not incurred that large expense which it was alleged they would have to incur to make the concession to public opinion, and certainly I would hope that, seeing that in every way in which you approach the subject, the public would benefit by the opening of the Museum on Sunday——

THE CHAIRMAN: This is a question that should be raised on the Vote for Administration, not for the Maintenance of the building. The hon. Member should discuss the point he desires to raise when the Vote for Administration and Personnel comes forward.

DR. TANNER: In that case I will defer my observations.

Vote agreed to.

5. £33,993, to complete the sum for Diplomatic and Consular Buildings.

(5.44.) MR. LABOUCHERE: This is one of the Votes we were anxious to have postponed, and there is one item in it really very important—£9,000 for the purchase of a site for building a house at Cairo. It can hardly be said that in the present condition of affairs we can discuss this matter just now; and what I would suggest is, that if the Vote is passed now, it should be understood it is without prejudice of any opinion we may have to express as to the purchase of this Cairo site, that we have in no way pledged ourselves, and that we may raise the question on Report.

*(5.45.) MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member would only be within his right in raising this question on Report; and, as he says, the passing of the Vote now is without prejudice to any Motion he may think it right to make on Report, when he will have full opportunity offered him for raising a discussion. I have explained the circumstances under which we are compelled to ask for the Vote, and those circumstances will equally hold good when we ask the House to confirm the Vote of the Committee.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I did not hear them.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: We are compelled to purchase the site, and the arrangement will lapse unless we complete the purchase within a given time.

MR. LABOUCHERE: The House may amend the Vote.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: We must take our responsibility for that. The hon. Member will be perfectly within his right in moving the reduction of the Vote by £9,000, but I need not say the Government will adhere to the original sum, and we have no doubt the House will sustain us.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I only hope it will be fairly understood that we have not assented to it.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: We shall put it no higher than that the Committee has assented to the Vote.

MR. LABOUCHERE: That is just it.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: We shall ask the House to approve the assent of the Committee. The hon. Member knows perfectly well that it is entirely within his right to move that the House shall disagree with the Committee to the extent of £9,000 or any other sum.

(5.47.) MR. LEVESON GOWER (Stoke-on-Trent): I have no wish to waste time; but can the Government give us any information as to the increase under the head of new works for the Legations in China and Japan? The item is £5,200 this year; it was only £2,000 last year.

*(5.47.) MR. PLUNKET: As the hon. Member is aware, our relations with China and Japan are becoming very much more extended, and it has become more and more expedient, as the importance of our relations with these countries has increased, that our representatives should be placed in positions

of dignity and comfort. Without going in detail into the work, which, in various places has been necessary, I may assure the hon. Member that this additional expense has been found to be absolutely necessary, and it is a not altogether unsatisfactory sign of increasing importance of our relations with these countries.

(5.48.) MR. W REDMOND: Can the right hon. Gentleman explain the increased cost of the Legation at Tangiers? That which was last year £2,195 is increased this year to £6,200. For a place of this kind it would seem to me it is a disproportionate increase. Also I should like to have some explanation of items under Sub-head T, where there is a decrease from the estimate of last year for various Missions and Consulates. It appears to me that there are many places abroad where large sums of money are spent under this head without any returning advantage. I should like to know how the Government proceed in regard to this expenditure, whose estimate they act upon, and whether any tenders for the contracts are invited. It is fit matter for remark, I think, that we should be asked to sanction an increase of £4,000 on a place like Tangiers without an explanation.

*(5.49.) MR. PLUNKET: As to the Legation at Tangiers, that was a subject of discussion last year, and this is the carrying out of an undertaking I then explained which involved an expenditure of £9,000. The principle we proceed upon, when it becomes necessary to sanction additional expenditure, is where it is practicable to send a surveyor to make personal investigation as to value. We have an officer who is frequently employed in such work. The necessity (Tangiers) has arisen from reasons I need not now go into again. Shortly, I may say that the growth of Native building around the old house has rendered it unfit for the habitation of our Representative.

Vote agreed to.

6. £281,465, to complete the sum for Revenue Department Buildings, Great Britain.

7. £176,000, to complete the sum for Surveys of the United Kingdom.

8. £17,375, to complete the sum for Harbours and Lighthouses Abroad under the Board of Trade.

(5.22.) MR. W. REDMOND: I understood the First Lord to say that he would be satisfied if the first eight Votes were taken.

*(5.22.) MR. W. H. SMITH: No. I said it was absolutely necessary that the first eight Votes should be taken because of the contracts to which I referred; but there were other Votes I mentioned as being of a character that would not occupy much time, and these I asked the Committee to take before the Adjournment. That was the understanding.

(5.53.) MR. W. REDMOND: It appears, then, that I was mistaken. The right hon. Gentleman asks us to take these Votes as being of a non-contentious character, but that does not apply to Vote 10. Occasion arises for a short discussion upon Holyhead Harbour, upon which item there is an increase of £4,702, due to the repair of damages caused by storm. Upon this matter questions have been addressed to the Government, and I am aware that great dissatisfaction has been expressed as to the manner in which works on the breakwater at Holyhead have been carried out. I am not, myself, prepared to state the case; but I know there is much to be said on the subject by Members not now present, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to allow the Vote to stand over, or to give an undertaking that a full opportunity for discussion shall be given on Report.

*(5.55.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I am sorry that I am unable to consent to a postponement; but, undoubtedly, there will be an opportunity on Report for the hon. Member and his friends to make such observations as they may think fit. I am in the recollection of the House when I say that I distinctly stated that I must ask the Committee to continue until these Votes were taken.

Vote agreed to.

9. £25,040, to complete the sum for Peterhead Harbour.

10. £4,000, to complete the sum for Caledonian Canal.

11. £156,453, to complete the sum for rates on Government property.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday 14th April.

Committee to sit again upon Monday 14th April.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1890-91.

CLASS 1.

Resolutions [31st March] reported.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £31,725, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, for expenditure in respect of Royal Palaces and Marlborough House."

(6.0.) MR. W. REDMOND: I think before the House agrees to this Resolution we ought to have a promise from the Government that they will endeavour to lessen the expenditure on the unoccupied Royal Palaces. As I said last night, we do not complain of proper provision being made for proper Palaces for members of the Royal Family, but it does seem a monstrous thing that year after year thousands of pounds should be expended upon Royal Palaces that members of the Royal Family never occupy. At least, I think an undertaking should be given that inquiry shall be made with a view to the reduction of this expenditure. I do not see why the Government should not undertake to appoint a Committee on the subject. I am quite sure there is much dissatisfaction caused throughout the country as public attention is drawn year after year to the large sums of money the House of Commons is called upon to vote for buildings that serve no public purpose whatever, and I think the Government should give an undertaking that they will endeavour to practise economy under this Vote.

*(6.5.) MR. PLUNKET: Certainly; I can give an undertaking that I will always do my best to reduce expenditure under this Vote, and every other Vote for which I am responsible. So far as I am concerned, the hon. Gentleman may rest assured I will give my best attention to the matter.

MR. W. REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman give a Committee?

Resolution agreed to.

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £78,775, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

(6.10.) MR. W. REDMOND: I cannot lose the opportunity of expressing my strong opinion that a great many of these Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens might, without any detriment to their use by the Royal Family, be thrown open to the public. I may mention, for instance, Hampton Court Park and the grounds of Buckingham Palace. These last, I believe, are extensive, and I am assured on good authority are never used. It is only reasonable, of course, that while Her Majesty is in residence at Buckingham Palace the public should be excluded; but for a great part of the year the Palace is empty, and then the grounds might be thrown open to the public. Open spaces in London are not so many that this would not be a great boon to the people, and I cannot help thinking that Her Majesty would not object to her people having an entry to the grounds during her absence from London. There is no intention whatever of encroaching unwarrantably on the privileges of those who have special claims to the enjoyment of the Royal Parks, but surely it is not an unreasonable request that the people who contribute nearly £100,000 towards the maintenance of the Parks should have some share in the enjoyment.

*(6.15.) MR. MORTON: Several questions were put last night in relation to this Vote to which no answers were given for want of time, and, perhaps, we may have the answers to-day. I asked whether in future the expenses of St. James's Park, the Green Park, and Hyde Park could be kept separate. I also wished to know the functions of the bailiff of the Royal Parks. He appears to be a military officer, but I cannot understand what his duties are. Then I find a large expenditure for the Rangers' Department, and I ask why this expenditure when we have a large item for police. Then I asked for an explanation of the item on page 12—£96 for allowances in lieu of fees. If fees are abolished and you then make allowances

out of the public money, I do not see much gain in the result.

Resolution agreed to.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) (PLEURO-PNEUMONIA) BILL.—(No. 168.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(6.18.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): It has been arranged that this Bill shall be taken to-night, and I will, therefore, explain its object very shortly. The Bill proposes to confer upon the Board of Agriculture further powers for the purpose of dealing with pleuro-pneumonia, which has previously been dealt with by Local Authorities under various Acts of Parliament and Orders in Council. Most stringent measures have been taken, and large sums of money expended for cattle which have been slaughtered, and great expenses have been incurred by the various Local Authorities, but without any adequate result, owing to a want of uniformity of action, which experience has taught it is almost impossible to obtain. Under these circumstances, it seems impossible and useless to persevere with a system which has involved so many sacrifices without satisfactory results. If that is so, one alternative is that we should altogether abandon the hope of ever getting rid of that disease. That would be a most unfortunate conclusion, for the example of the Netherlands shows the possibility of extirpating the disease. By the Bill it is proposed that there shall be placed at the disposal of the Board of Agriculture a sum of money which it is hoped will obviate the necessity of trenching on local resources. The adoption of this principle is, I think, absolutely necessary, because the Local Authorities cannot be expected to submit to a large and wholly unlimited expenditure of their funds by a Central Department over which they will have no control. It is further provided in the Bill, in view of the possibility of a deficiency arising, that it is in the case of Great Britain to be met out of the local taxation accounts of England and Scotland respectively in the proportions mentioned in the Bill, which are the same as those in which the Probate Duty is distributed. I am aware objection may be taken to that on the ground that it interferes with the allocation of moneys already provided for certain specific local purposes, and also that a county perfectly free from disease may be called upon to contribute. On the other hand, it should be remembered, first of all, that the risk is very remote. It has been impossible to obtain an accurate estimate; but on the best estimate we could get, I have every reason to hope that the risk of calling upon local resources will be very remote. In the second place, if the localities are called upon to pay, it will be a fractional amount, considering that the whole deficiency would be distributed among all the different counties; and, in the third place, it must be remembered that although there are now a great number of counties entirely free from the disease, they are all liable to it at any moment. In view of the great advantages they are going to receive, they may be well content to bear the infinitesimal risk to be thrown upon them. Ireland will be treated separately under the Bill, and the Lord Lieutenant and the Privy Council will be substituted for the Board of Agriculture. A sum will be provided by the Imperial Exchequer, and any deficiency will be met out of the General Cattle Disease Fund, which is already in existence and which has been frequently used for that purpose. I hope I have described clearly, if briefly, the objects of this Bill, and the means by which it is intended to carry them out. I sincerely hope the House will allow the Bill to be now read a second time. It is a Bill with regard to which the Government have received numerous appeals and petitions from various parts of the country, and I think there is a general wish that it shall now be read a second time. If there is any objection to it in point of detail that can be dealt with in Committee. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Henry Chaplin.*)

(6.24.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I conclude that the House is in favour of this Bill being read a second time to-day. I do not therefore oppose the Bill; but I wish to guard the House against being committed to everything it contains. Some of its provisions will, no doubt, have to be discussed in Committee. The Bill arms the Agricultural Department with very large powers in order to stamp out pleuro-pneumonia. I believe that the only way to effect the object of the Bill is by the pole-axe, as has been proved by the experience of the Netherlands. Not only should all the cattle affected be slaughtered, but everything which has been brought into contact with them should be destroyed also. It has been a long, painful, and expensive process in the Netherlands, but it has been successful; and I believe that if the powers in the Bill are courageously acted upon their object will be attained.

(6.25.) DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I hail the Bill with satisfaction, and congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on having so well signalised his accession to office. I have the honour to represent in this House a cattle breeding and feeding county; and I may say that great inconvenience has been experienced in Aberdeenshire owing to the various Local Authorities not being equally strict in their enforcement of the Acts and Orders. We know perfectly well that pleuro-pneumonia is not a disease which springs up spontaneously, and I believe the prospects of stamping it out will be much increased if the provisions of this Bill are properly carried out.

(6.27.) DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I am hardly so sanguine as my right hon. Friend, who apparently wants to slaughter everything and everybody happening to be brought into contact with a diseased animal. It should not be forgotten that there is a remedy short of extermination. In some of our Colonies the disease has been stamped out by means of inoculation, which is a much less expensive process. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give a reasonable time before the Committee stage is taken.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday, 24th April.

Resolutions agreed to.
Mr. Mundella

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday, 14th April.

CRIMINAL LAW PROCEDURE AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 95.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(6.28.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope the hon. Gentleman will not persist at this hour in pressing forward the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. BRADLAUGH: The whole of the Bill, except one point, has been practically accepted by the Government. As I am willing to abandon that point, I hope the Government will allow the Second Reading to pass. To utilise spare minutes such as these is the only chance that a private Member has of passing a Bill; and I think it is rather hard that, in such circumstances as I have mentioned, the Government should bar its further progress. If the Government intend to adhere to that course, then I am ready to challenge a Division. I will strike out every portion of the Bill to which the Government takes objection.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Then I assent to the Second Reading.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday 14th April.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.—(No. 200.)

Ordered, That the Bill, as amended, be printed. [Bill 220.]

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, That this House, at the conclusion of the Morning Sitting, this day, do adjourn till Monday 14th April.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

House adjourned at twenty minutes
before Seven o'clock til
Monday, 14th April

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 14th April, 1890.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS ELECTRIC LIGHTING BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) moved that the Order for the Second Reading be read and discharged, and that the Bill be withdrawn.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order for the Second Reading be read and discharged, and that the Bill be withdrawn."

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): As my name appears on the Paper in connection with a notice of opposition to this Bill, I wish to explain the reasons which induced me to give it. I know that very strong reasons ought to be given to justify the House in rejecting a Private Bill on the Second Reading, because there is always an opportunity of having the measure fully discussed before a Select Committee. But the House is aware that Bills relating to electric lighting can be proceeded with by way of Provisional Order. In this case the authorities of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields have not taken the trouble to ask for a Provisional Order, but have introduced a Private Bill. They have now withdrawn their Bill; but I think they ought to have given earlier notice of their intention to withdraw it. Notice was only given this morning, and, so far as I am personally concerned, I have come up expressly from the North for the purpose of opposing the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

HEREDITARY PENSIONS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is now in a position to state, or whether he will be able to lay upon the Table a Minute showing, the course he intends to pursue with respect to the several perpetual and hereditary pensions, payments, and allowances still uncommuted, and as to which a Select Committee of this House, in 1887, unanimously reported in favour of their abolition?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I have now received a completed Report from the Law Officers with regard to the several perpetual and hereditary pensions, &c., still uncommuted; but, owing to the preparation of the Budget, I have not yet been able to give to the subject that personal attention which is indispensable to its proper consideration.

IRISH ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS.

Mr. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the serious and numerous errors in the Irish Ordnance Survey Maps now being issued, such as for example, sheet 168, inch scale, extensions of Waterford and Limerick Railway opened in 1864 and 1886 not marked; two guide banks, one with lighthouse in River Suir, made 1867 (marked in chart of the river) not marked; about one and a half miles of new road between Waterford and Passage opened in 1855, not marked; Knockaderry Reservoir made in 1875, not marked; sheet 179, inch scale, embankments, reclaiming land near Tramore made in 1863 or 1864, and one mile of cliff road near Lady's Cove, Tramore made in 1869, not marked; sheet 9 (County Waterford) 6-inch scale, People's Park made about 1855, and new court house built about 1855, not marked; whether the Government are taking any action to promptly correct these and similar mistakes in other maps; and whether there is any reason why the Government should not revert to the old plan of supplying maps direct from the Survey Office in the Phœnix Park, so as to save the public the heavy expense of a special messenger there when the Dublin agents are out of stock of sheets required by return post?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Chaplin, Lincoln, Sleaford): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer the question. The practice of the Ordnance Survey is to insert new railways only on the 1-inch sheets. The insertion of other details, such as new roads, reservoirs, buildings, &c., on the 1-inch and larger scales, forms part of the general revision of the country. The necessity for completing the cadastral survey of those parts of England and Wales which have hitherto had no map on a larger scale than 1-inch to a mile has been so urgent that it has been impossible to devote as much of the Survey Vote as is desirable to the revision of the Irish maps. This year, however, a considerable increase has been sanctioned in the funds available for the survey of Ireland, and it is hoped that the work in that country will proceed more rapidly. With reference to the last paragraph, contracts for the sale of Ordnance Survey maps have been made with three firms to act as sole agents in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively. The Director of the Survey is of opinion that the system is not satisfactory, and when a favourable opportunity occurs it will be carefully considered.

IMPORTATION OF MOSS LITTER

MR. YOUNG (Christchurch): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Customs officers have the right, and whether it is their practice, to examine every tenth bale of moss litter imported into this country by cutting it through the centre, thereby rendering it unsaleable; and whether any steps can be taken to modify this practice, so as to protect the consignee of such goods from injury as far as possible?

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes; the Customs officers certainly have the right to examine any imported package. But I am advised that it is not their practice to cut through every tenth bale. What they actually do is to examine by boring, a different operation from cutting through, 8 or 10 per cent. of the bales, and to investigate about 2 per cent. more by opening.

THE QUINN BEQUEST.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General why there is so great delay in the matter of the "Quinn Bequest" for Newry?

Mr. Chaplin

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): In reply to the hon. and learned Member, I have to say that there has been no great or unusual delay in the matter to which his question refers. The settlement of schemes of this kind always occupies a certain amount of time. In the month of November of last year I took all the steps in my power to expedite matters. The scheme was settled early this year, and has been deposited in order that suggestions from the locality may be received and considered. The matter is now well advanced, and I hope that it will be completed before Whitsuntide. I would remind the hon. and learned Gentleman, as he is well aware, that I have not the conduct of the matter.

THE CIRCUS ROAD POST OFFICE.

MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it has been decided to move the Circus Road Branch Post and Telegraph Office from its present central position to St. John's Wood Terrace, where it will be much less convenient for the public, being away from the main road; and whether the owner of the premises in Circus Road is willing to grant extended accommodation at a fair rent?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): It has been decided to move the Circus Road Branch Post Office to 104, St. John's Wood Terrace. The new position will be about 150 yards further from Wellington Road; but it will, I hope, be found reasonably convenient for the neighbourhood generally. The owner of the Circus Road premises was willing to add an adjoining house, but the accommodation would not have been satisfactory, and the increase of rent would have been unduly large.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

MR. DONAL SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, with reference to the adjustments of increments and payments of arrears to the new Second Division clerks in connection with the conversion of triennial into annual increments, it is a fact that fractions, amounting in many cases to nearly the complete pound, have been excluded from such calculations, resulting in losses in these instances both immediately and annually; and whether, in view of this, he will remedy this grievance and cause these arrears of increments to be calculated to the nearest pound?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): It is true that, in accordance with the directions contained in the recent Order in Council, fractions of a pound are omitted in converting the triennial increments of Second Division clerks into annual increments. No power is reserved to the Treasury to modify these directions.

VACCINATION RETURNS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Return "Vaccination Acts (persons imprisoned, &c.)" is incomplete, and, if so, in what respect; and if he can state the reasons for such incompleteness; whether he can inform the House why no mention is made of persons imprisoned or fined at Edmonton Petty Sessions; and why the County of Middlesex is entirely omitted?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; this Return is incomplete in so far as by inadvertence Returns from the Petty Sessional Courts of Middlesex as well as from the Metropolitan Police Courts is not included. The County of Middlesex are not, however, entirely omitted. It is represented in the Return from the Metropolitan Police Court Districts. Steps have been taken to obtain the necessary statistics from these Petty Sessional Courts, and the Return will be supplemented with the now missing particulars at the earliest possible date.

TELEGRAMS TO FRANCE.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, in view of the fact that telegrams are charged for throughout France at the rate of less than ½d. per word, and that throughout the United Kingdom, even between the South-East of England and across St. George's Channel to the North-West of Ireland, the charge is ½d. per word, he will open negotiations for a reduction of the charge for telegraphic messages from England to France to 1d. per word, in place of 2d., the present rate?

Mr. RAIKES: No, Sir.

AMERICA—HONG KONG POSTAL CHARGES.

Mr. H. HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the postage from the British Settlement of Hong Kong to the United States of America is 5d. per half-ounce, and from the United States to Hong Kong 2½d. per half-ounce; and whether he will consider the feasibility of lowering the postal charge from Hong Kong to the United States to 2½d. per half-ounce?

Mr. RAIKES: The explanation is that for which I have so often had to claim the indulgence of the House for the gratification of the hon. Member The United States is one of the countries of the Postal Union which do not choose to avail themselves of the option reserved by the Convention to charge a surtax over and above the fundamental rate of 2½d. on letters carried long distances by sea. The Colony of Hong Kong is within its Treaty rights in pursuing the contrary course and charging a surtax; and I should not, I conceive, be warranted in interfering in the matter.

IRELAND—EVICTIONS ON THE SWEENEY ESTATE.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland, with regard to the abandoned, or postponed, evictions on the Sweeney Estate, in the County of Donegal, whether any communication was recently made on the part of the Irish Government to the landlord of that estate, urging him to proceed with the evictions?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): It is not the fact that any communication has recently been made by the Irish Government urging the landlord of this estate not to proceed with the evictions.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether there has been any communication with the landlord urging him not to press on the evictions?

MR. MADDEN: No, Sir.

MR. SEXTON: I will take the first opportunity of showing that there was.

POST OFFICE IN LISBURN.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the post office at Sloan Street, Lisburn, sanctioned a month ago, has not yet been opened; what is the cause of the delay; and how soon the opening will take place?

*MR. RAIKES: The opening of a post office at Sloan Street, Lisburn, has been awaiting the appointment of a suitable person as Receiver. That appointment has now been made, and the office will be opened as soon as the new Receiver can be instructed in his duties.

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANKS.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury why Irish depositors in the Government savings banks are obliged to give seven days' notice for withdrawal of sums of £10 and upwards?

MR. JACKSON: I think the hon. Member, in speaking of Government savings banks, is in error. I presume that he refers to Trustee savings banks, whith are not "Government savings banks." The withdrawal of deposits in such banks is governed by the rules of the banks, and the practice is not identical—in some cases a longer, in others a shorter, notice is required—but the matter is entirely within the discretion of the Trustees, by whom the rules are framed.

MR. SEXTON: Can the Postmaster General say what notice of withdrawal is required?

*MR. RAIKES: I will find out and let the hon. Gentleman know.

TRAWLING IN THE MORAY FIRTH.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that hardship is inflicted on the fishing population by the illegal operations of trawlers working within the proscribed limits in the Moray Firth, especially on Sundays; whether complaints have reached him regarding this matter; and whether a Government vessel could be employed to cruise in the Moray Firth with the object of preventing such breaches of the Law?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute.): I am informed that two complaints have recently been made to the Fishery Board against steam trawlers for fishing within the prescribed limits in the Moray Firth, and that they are now being investigated by the Procurator Fiscal. A Government vessel is at present employed on the East Coast, and visits the Moray Firth, as well as other parts of that coast.

THE ALLOTMENTS BILL.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can fix any day before which the Allotments Bill will not be taken?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I think I can say that it will not be taken this week.

THE WELSH SUNDAY CLOSING COMMISSION.

MR. A. THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.): Will the First Lord of the Treasury say what action the Government propose to take in reference to the Report of the Welsh Sunday Closing Commission?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I must ask the hon. Member to give notice of the question. I have not myself seen the Report, and it is obvious that the Government should have some time to consider it before making any statement.

THE IRISH CHURCH SURPLUS.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: Has the Chancellor of the Exchequer any objection to lay on the Table and circulate a Paper giving details of the present state of the Irish Church surplus?

MR. GOSCHEN: A Paper is being prepared showing the present state of the Irish Church surplus, and I hope it may be possible to lay it upon the Table of the House.

THE LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) BILL—RETURNS.

MR. SEXTON: When will the promised Papers in connection with the Land Bill be given?

MR. MADDEN: They are in course of preparation, and I hope that they will shortly be in the hands of Members.

THE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR SERVICE VOTE.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): May I ask if there was not an understanding before the adjournment for the holidays that no Votes would be taken to-night in relation to Foreign Affairs, and, if so, is it proposed to proceed with the Diplomatic and Consular Vote which stands first on the Paper in Supply?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: There was no understanding that the Diplomatic and Consular Vote was not to be taken to-night, and Class 5 has been put down after notice. The understanding at the close of last Session was that these Votes which had been postponed should be taken at the earliest possible period this year. The Report of the Diplomatic and Consular Vote will, however, be postponed for at least a week, and Members who desire to speak upon it will have an opportunity of doing so. They will also have an opportunity of speaking on Foreign Affairs on the Foreign Office Vote in Class 2.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): As next week is likely to be a full week, may I ask whether full opportunity will be afforded for the discussion of this Vote on Report.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: If it is desired to discuss the Vote, full opportunity for the discussion will be afforded.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY FOR INJURIES TO WORKMEN BILL.

In reply to Mr. Bradlaugh,

*Mr. W. H. SMITH said that the Second Reading of this Bill would not be taken this week.

JOHN DALY.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask the Home Secretary if he is now in a position to circulate the Report and evidence in regard to the case of John Daly?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I regret to say that I am not yet in a position to do so.

Mr. SEXTON: I will repeat the question on Thursday.

THE CREWE MURDER.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary a question of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether he has any objection to state to the House upon what grounds he founded his advice to the Crown to grant and withhold the Royal clemency in the case of George Davies and Richard Davies in connection with the recent murder at Crewe?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The case of the Davies brothers at Crewe was one of a cruel and deliberate murder, in which the jury most properly based their recommendation to mercy on the ground of youth alone. It was impossible in such a case to give effect to the recommendation in the case of Richard Davies, who was all but 19—an age approaching manhood, in which responsibility for deliberate crime has been enforced, and, in my opinion, should be enforced. George Davies was only 16 years and eight months. No person so young has been left for execution for very many years. Although his guilt was undoubted, the conclusion at which I arrived, after very careful study of all the evidence, was that he acted under the influence of his elder brother, that Richard initiated the plot, and took the principal part in its execution. Under these circumstances, I thought it was possible to give effect to the recommendation of the jury in the case of George. I am permitted to say that I had the advice and concurrence of the learned Judge in extending mercy to George and to him alone.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has had any evidence in addition to that given to the jury at the trial in favour of the opinion he has expressed, that it was the elder brother who plotted and took the main part in the execution of the murder; whether the jury who tried the case did not publicly declare after the trial that the recommendation to mercy was intended to apply equally to both prisoners; and whether he knows of any instance in which such a recommendation has been disregarded?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have already exceeded somewhat the precedent in answering any question at all upon this subject. I must entirely decline to enter on any discussion of the evidence or of the facts, the whole of which were under my most careful consideration. It is within the knowledge of the hon. Gentleman that the whole of the facts appeared in the newspapers, and I must refer him to them.

MAIL CONTRACT (LONDON AND EAST COAST OF AFRICA) (ZANZIBAR).

Copy ordered—

"Of Contract with the British India Steam Navigation Company, dated the 5th day of February, 1890, for the conveyance of Mails between London and East Coast of Africa (Zanzibar), together with a Copy of the Treasury Minute relating thereto."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 122.]

SUCK DRAINAGE [PROVISION OF FUNDS].

Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a portion of the Costs, Charges, and Expenses which have been or may be incurred by the Drainage Board for the River Suck Drainage District (Queen's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.

CONTRACTS WITH FOREIGNERS.

Return ordered—

"Of all Contracts for Articles of Home Manufacture made in the United Kingdom by the several Government Departments, between the 1st day of April, 1889, and the 31st day of March, 1890, with Contractors outside the Kingdom (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 215, of Session 1889)."—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

MOTION.

EDUCATION CODE (1890) BILL.

On Motion of Sir William Hart Dyke, Bill for the purpose of making operative certain Articles in the Education Code, 1890, ordered to be brought in by Sir William Hart Dyke, Lord George Hamilton, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 222.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

INLAND REVENUE REGULATION BILL. (No. 211.)

SECOND READING.

(3.50.) Order for Second Reading read.

MR. JACKSON: I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill, which is a consolidation Bill pure and simple, with the exception of four minor points, which are stated in the Memorandum issued with the Bill. The Government have been pressed to introduce the measure, and, having taken the usual means of ascertaining the feeling on both sides of the House, they find that the course now proposed, namely, to read it a second time and refer it to a Standing Committee, is generally acceptable.

MR. W. REDMOND: Is it the fact that the Bill was circulated only this morning?

MR. JACKSON: No; it was circulated before Easter.

Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," put, and agreed to.

Question, "That the Bill be referred to the Select Committee on Statute Law Revision," put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES 1890-1.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS V.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £307,909, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions Abroad, and of the Consular Establishments Abroad and other Expenditure chargeable on the Consular Vote."

(4.2.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I think, Mr. Courtney, that as we have made great progress with the Estimates at this early period of the Session, it is obvious that we shall have more time for entering into this Vote than we have usually had. The First Lord of the Treasury has said that we shall have another opportunity of discussing these questions. I hope that we shall have many opportunities, because it is a Vote which requires careful looking into. I find that the first item of the Vote has reference to the Argentine Republic, and that the Legation and Consulate at Buenos Ayres cost £4,500 a year; but the Committee will be surprised to hear that the cost of a similar mission at Uruguay is something like £1,750 less. The cause of the difference is the tomfooleries in which we indulge at Buenos Ayres and abstain from indulging in at Monte Video. So far as

Europe is concerned, there may be some justification for having these Legations, but in South America there cannot be the slightest justification for them. In South America the people are practical people, and they do not understand the difference between a Consul General, an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, and a Vice Consul. They go to the Consulate solely for the business purposes they have to transact. There are very few social duties involved, and if the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will look into the matter he will find that the Argentine Republic is the sole Republic in South America which enjoys the presence of an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. As I find that it costs £2,750 more per annum than any other Mission in South America, I propose to move the reduction of the Vote by that sum, which will leave the expense of our representation in the Argentine Republic at the same figure as for Uruguay, and more than it is at some of the other Republics.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £305,159, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): May I ask, as the general practice is to move the reduction of particular items in a Vote, whether, if the present Amendment is taken, it will be competent for an hon. Member to move a further reduction?

MR. LABOUCHERE: I do not think that the effect of my Amendment will be to prevent further discussion of the Vote or Motions for further reductions.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) is quite right in the view he takes.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Then it will be competent to move further reductions?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, certainly.

*(4.7.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The question which the hon. Member for Northampton has just raised is one which he raised two years ago, and I am afraid that I can only give him the answer which I gave then, and which is equally applicable now, namely, that the raising of the post of Her Majesty's representative at Buenos Ayres to the dignity which now attaches to it was in conformity with the recommendation of the Consular Committee which sat in 1870. It is most necessary that Her Majesty's Government should be efficiently represented, and the expense which is entailed is by no means excessive. The hon. Member says that we should be as well represented by a Consular Officer as by a Diplomatic Minister, but that is not the opinion of foreign countries, and we should be placed in an inferior position to that which is occupied by Foreign Powers if we were not represented at the Argentine Republic in as dignified a manner as they are. In regard to the Argentine Republic there have been special reasons why we should have been led to increase our establishment there, owing to the great amount of emigration to that country from Ireland which has recently taken place, and to which attention has been specially directed by hon. Members opposite. The complaint which has been made is that British and Irish interests have not been adequately safeguarded, and therefore Her Majesty's Government have slightly increased the establishment in order to meet the extra work. I trust that these will be considered sufficient reasons to justify this Vote, and that it will be agreed to without further discussion.

(4.12.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I do not think that we ought to be bound by the recommendation of a Committee which sat in 1870. I have read the Report of that Committee, and I certainly do not think much of it. I must say that I think the right hon. Gentleman is almost trifling with the House when he says that emigration from Ireland to Buenos Ayres really necessitates the continuance there of double the number of gentlemen to those who are required in Monte Video. Of course, it is possible to get hold of a gentleman who has been in the Diplomatic Service at Darmstadt or St. Petersburg, who has been mixing in courtly society there, and who probably has never seen South America in his life. If such a man is sent out he would probably ask to be surrounded by an expensive staff, and in this case I find that we have a Minister at £1,500 a year, a Secretary of Legation at £500 a year, a second Secretary at £450, together with a clerk at £200, who probably does more work than the Minister and the first and second Secretaries put together. That is not all. At Monte Video all the work is consular work, and so far as the emigration work at Buenos Ayres is concerned it is purely consular, and not diplomatic, work. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that we carry out the same principle all over South America? He knows that we do not. There are a considerable number of Republics in South America where France and other Powers retain Envoys Extraordinary and Ministers Plenipotentiary, but where we have simply Consular Agents; but it is a remarkable fact that when you once put up the salary and the position they always continue. There is really no reason why in the Argentine Republic, any more than in any other of the Republics of South America, we should have the expensive mechanism which is attached to the office of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. I shall certainly divide the Committee upon the Amendment, in order to make it clear that we are not prepared, year after year, to vote for this useless and unnecessary expenditure, simply because a Committee which sat in 1870 thought it desirable.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: In certain cases, as in Stuttgardt, where a Minister is no longer deemed necessary, the post has been done away with, and in others the office of Minister and Consul General has been united, but in the case of the Argentine Republic, the case is different, inasmuch as the increasing demands of British interests make it necessary that this country should be adequately represented. There are, indeed, reasons connected with emigration which have rendered an increase in the Argentine establishment necessary, and under this head provision has been made in the Vote.

(4.17.) MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): May I ask what has been and is being done by these gentlemen in the interests of Irish emigrants? What services do they perform to entitle them to the large sum we are asked to vote, and what are the qualifications they possess for the discharge of the duties? So far as I know, complaints are continually coming from the Argentine Republic, in spite of the presence of our representative there, and I believe I am correct in saying that in Ireland the people at large have no knowledge of any special efforts which are being made to protect Irish interests, or of any Reports on the subject.

(4.20.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the Papers which were furnished on the subject last year. There is no ground for reproach or blame of the kind suggested, and Her Majesty's Representative is assiduous in attending to the interests of British and Irish immigrants, as well as to all the other duties of his post.

(4.22.) MR. W. REDMOND: That is not the complaint. What I contend is that officers could be found who would be quite as zealous and as determined to do their duty for a much less sum than we are asked to vote for these gentlemen. It is precisely because I think we were shown last year that there was something radically wrong in the management of the affairs of emigrants to the Argentine Republic arriving from Ireland, that I made up my mind to come here and repeat what I had said before. I think that the salaries should be cut down by at least one half, and I would certainly urge the hon. Member for Northampton to divide the Committee on the subject. It is simply monstrous that this country should be asked to pay £4,500 a year for a Mission to the Argentine Republic.

(4.25.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I do not think the Under Secretary has told the Committee the whole story in connection with the Consular Service in the Argentine Republic. I believe our representative, Mr. Bridgett, was absent on leave for a considerable time in 1888, and that Mr. Ibbetson, who was appointed Acting Consul in his place, was subsequently sentenced to three months imprisonment for embezzling the consular fees. Another officer, Mr. W. G. Turner, who acted as clerk and pro-Consul, was also charged with embezzlement, and absconded. He was arrested in England and sentenced to a month's imprisonment for misbehaviour in office. Mr. Bridgett seems to have been absent from his duties from the early part of 1888 until a late period in the same year, and it is a matter of some interest to know how the affairs of the

Mission were conducted in his absence, and what is the exact condition of the Consulate at Buenos Ayres at the present moment. It would appear that at least £500 was embezzled by Mr. Bridgett's immediate or indirect official representative, and the whole of the Mission appears to have been in an exceedingly lax condition. In this case responsibility cannot be traced; an officer has been absent from an important post for six or eight months, Papers which ought to have been sent to the Foreign Office have not been sent and they have been called for in vain. Nevertheless, the Estimates are proposed to be increased in favour of a Mission of this kind. I think the Committee ought to receive some special information on the points I have indicated before they consent to pass the Vote.

*(4.27.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: It frequently happens that Consular Officers require leave, in which case their places are filled by efficient substitutes.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Who are irresponsible.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: The Consul is still responsible to Her Majesty's Government. As to the arrival of emigrants, unfortunately it occurred that after one ship arrived full of emigrants another arrived on the following day, when the barracks for emigrants were full. Immediate steps were, however, taken to afford accommodation.

(4.28.) Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I must say that I think the right hon. Gentleman has failed to answer the extremely able speech of the hon. Member for Northampton. The hon. Member showed that he was more than justified in calling attention to the subject, for the debate has developed the fact that, both in regard to the Legation and the Consulate, the arrangements have led to embezzlement and to the discharge of the duties of the Mission in a manner which ought to receive the reprobation of this House. So far as the emigration to the Argentine Republic is concerned, I think that those who intended to emigrate should have received information as to what the real condition of things was before they left Ireland, so that they might have decided upon not emigrating at all, or upon postponing their journey until a more convenient season. I can only say that in the South of Ireland, from which a considerable amount of emigration took place, there has been a feeling of exasperation at the manner in which the emigrants have been treated. When people are proposing to leave their homes and their country, perhaps for ever, they ought to be informed what the actual condition of the country in which they intend to take refuge is. The Under Secretary, unfortunately, has given no answer whatever to the complaints which have been made, but has rather confirmed the reprobation of my hon. Friends. It is quite true that the hon. Member for Northampton made these complaints two years ago, but although attention is called to the misdeeds of the Government year after year the officials have still no answer to give.

(4.30.) Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman can hold out any hope that the Emigration Information Office can cope with the questions which have arisen in reference to emigration to the Argentine Republic. It is clear that persons have been holding out to the world that they are authorised by the Government of the Argentine Republic to make promises, which are afterwards repudiated by that Government, and that, as a result, persons who have gone out as emigrants have had difficulties of the most serious character in obtaining employment. I think a great deal of the distress that has occurred might have been prevented if proper information could have been furnished to emigrants with regard to the Argentine Republic.

*(4.32.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: I am very happy to be able to satisfy the hon. Member. There is no difficulty at all in procuring and circulating information about foreign countries in the way he mentions, and during the last year and a half I have been constantly sending to the Emigration Information Office information about the Argentine Republic and other countries. Circulars have been sent to all British representatives, asking them to furnish information that may be useful to persons purposing emigration, and I am sure the excellent office to which I have referred does circulate the information with which we have furnished it about the Argentine

Republic. The emigration in question took place in spite of the standing advice given by the most influential people in Ireland, namely, Archbishop Croke and many of the Catholic clergy.

(4.33.) MR. BRADLAUGH : The Emigration Information Office issues very cheap sheets of information about several countries, but I do not know that they have issued any such sheet with reference to some countries with regard to which information might very well be given. I think the right hon. Gentleman will agree with me that there is likely to be a larger tide of emigration from Italy to the Argentine Republic, and if some cheap sheets could be published, like those issued with regard to our colonies, a great deal of misery might be prevented.

*(4.34.) SIR J. FERGUSSON : I will make inquiries at the Emigration Office, and ascertain whether the hon. Member's suggestion can be carried out.

(4.34.) MR. W. REDMOND: The right hon. Gentleman has not told us how it is the Representatives of this country in the Argentine Republic have not warned Her Majesty's Government officially of the danger of large numbers of emigrants going there. Information ought to have been furnished as to the way in which emigrants get on in the Argentine Republic. We pay large sums of money to our Representatives, but we are unable to get from them the reliable information we need as to the characteristics of the country. We are obliged to depend upon the information furnished privately to Archbishop Croke and other gentlemen who take an interest in the welfare of emigrants abroad. If proper official information had been forthcoming people would not have gone to the Argentine Republic from Ireland in the numbers they did. If the right hon. Baronet can say that representations came from Her Majesty's Minister warning intending emigrants against the Argentine Republic, and hinting that they would have to face considerable difficulties if they went there, that Minister might be said to have earned the large sum of money he gets. But no such representations were made—or, if there were such, they did not reach the Irish people. What I say is that if we are to pay £4,000 a year to Representatives of Her Majesty's Government in the Argentine Republic, let them properly earn it, and do not let them leave it to Irish Archbishops to do their work.

*(4.42.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Representative in the Argentine Republic did exactly what the hon. Member says he should have done. As soon as he heard that large numbers of emigrants were being persuaded to go there, he, of his own accord, wrote home accounts of the country, which were disseminated. But it is a mistake to suppose that emigrants to the Argentine Republic, on the whole, do badly. What Her Majesty's Representative pointed out was that owing to the cost of living and to the different manner in which Southern races are fed emigrants leaving the United Kingdom for the Argentine Republic would not find themselves so well off on reaching there as they do on arriving at such places as Australia. Nevertheless, the emigrants in many parts of the Republic, where the climate is good, find themselves fairly well off. As I said last year when this question was raised, some of the emigrants went to places which were not suited to them, and some of them were thriftless and not industrious, and no credit to their own country.

(4.44.) MR. W. REDMOND: The right hon. Gentleman says that Her Majesty's Representative sent information to this country as soon as he heard that large numbers of emigrants were going to the Argentine Republic, and that that information was disseminated. I must take exception to that statement. These warnings did not reach the Irish Representatives—they were not circulated in Ireland. What we complain of is that Her Majesty's Representative in the Argentine Republic allowed unscrupulous emigration agents to come to Ireland, and by false pretences induce large numbers of people to emigrate. The right hon. Gentleman says that some of the emigrants were not good specimens of their race ; but that is no reason why unscrupulous persons should have been allowed to induce them to emigrate, and why no adequate preparations should have been made to receive them in the Argentine Republic. So far as Ireland is concerned, I think we have been badly represented in the Republic, and have every reason to complain of our treatment there. I trust the Amendment will be pushed to a Division.

*(4.46.) Mr. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I desire to know whether, when these gentlemen are appointed to represent this country abroad, care is taken that they have adequate knowledge of the language of the people amongst whom they have to live, so that they may not be at the mercy of the permanent local officials?

*(4.47.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: I am not able to say whether or not our Representative in the Argentine Republic can speak Spanish, but I think it likely, and he is a very capable man.

(4.47.) Mr. A. O'CONNOR: The answer the right hon. Gentleman gave me just now was not correct. Certain financial irregularities occurred at the particular place I mentioned. The Consul was absent for eight months at a stretch, and left no one responsible in his place. The man who acted for him was fraudulent. This Consul had had experience of embezzlements in previous years, and the person guilty had been punished and the amount of the embezzlements lost altogether. On the second occasion the Consul himself was made responsible, but only for a portion of the money, and the public have to bear a loss of at least £500. I want to know why he is not required to pay the whole of the money lost through his own negligence? What attempt is being made to secure that the administration in this Consular Office will be better in the future than it has been in the past? The right hon. Gentleman ought to be able to give me a definite answer.

*(4.51.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: The question the hon. Member asks me is as to an event not very recent.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR: It only occurred last August.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: At any rate it is easy to see how one might be inaccurate in a singular particular. I was under the impression that the Consul had borne the whole of the loss. At all events, he has borne a considerable part of it, and I have no doubt that when the circumstances were considered by the Secretary of State and the Treasury it was held that he was not so blameable that he ought to be required to bear the whole of the loss. Though a public servant, as a rule, is responsible for the robbery of a person he puts in his place, there may be circumstances under which the responsibility is diminished. I admit that at the present time I cannot give all the reasons which bear on the case, but it must be remembered that Consuls have not an extraordinary amount of leave, and that there has been no irregularity in the circumstance that a person not in the public service was temporarily charged with these duties.

(4.55.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 66; Noes 124.—(Div. List, No. 44.)

Original Question again proposed.

(5.3.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: The next item relates to Austria, and I find we maintain a chaplain to the Ambassador at Vienna, at a cost of £300 per annum. The law in regard to these chaplains is somewhat singular. Where there is a Consul the Foreign Office is permitted to give the equivalent of any amount which is subscribed by the British residents. The object of this was to enable chaplains to exist at ports. But it appears that now it is carried further, for we find occasionally that where there is a Legation or Embassy in a town in the interior, a salary is granted towards a chaplain. I do not gather whether this £300 is given to the chaplain because any amount is subscribed by the English residents at Vienna. There are exceedingly few English at Vienna, and I do not quite understand why we should have a chaplain there. There is not a chaplain in Paris or in Berlin. We know that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was very strong in the House in his advocacy of Christianity, but now he is amongst the Mahomedans in Persia, yet he does not require a chaplain. Then why should a chaplain be required for the Ambassador in Austria? I presume the chaplain belongs to the Church of England, but we might send a Roman Catholic, or a Jew, or a Nonconformist to Vienna. Or it may be that some of the secretaries there are Jews or Nonconformists. Are they to have separate chaplains? The whole thing is nonsensical; it is contrary to the elementary principles of religious toleration. The Ambassador is highly paid, and if he wants a chaplain to conduct divine service for himself on Sundays, let him pay him out of his salary. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £300 in respect of the chaplain in Vienna.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £307,609 be granted for the said Services."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*(5.6.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: The number of chaplains abroad is not as great as it formerly was; it has been reduced by a number of cases where there did not appear sufficient reason for the maintenance of chaplains. The particular chaplaincy to which the hon. Gentleman has called attention has existed since 1817, and the church in which the chaplain ministers was not erected at the cost of the British public, but of private subscriptions, and the Government undertook no responsibility in regard to its maintenance. The reason for appointing this chaplain in connection with the Vienna Embassy was the very strong desire on the part of the British subjects there for the ministrations of a clergyman of the National Church. [Hon. MEMBERS: "What Church?"] Well, the Church of the majority. [Hon. MEMBERS: "Oh, oh!" *and* "Which majority?"] Of course, I do not wish to incite debate on such controversial points, but the reason for appointing a chaplain in connection with the Embassy was, and is, that there is an Austrian law which requires pastors of churches recognised by the State to be Austrian subjects. By this clergyman being attached to the Embassy he is exempted from the operation of that law. I hope that the existence of this chaplain is, on the whole, very beneficial to many who, though they do belong to the Anglican communion, may find comfort in attending to his services. The Committee are aware that at Alexandria a Scotch chaplain is retained, because we find that in the Consulate there are many Scotchmen. [Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: No, English.] Well, perhaps, there is a sufficient number of Scotchmen to render them predominant. This is the only charge that is made in respect of this church and chaplain, and while we retain an Established Church I think I am not wrong in saying that the best way in which we can assist in providing religious services for our fellow-countrymen abroad is through the National Church.

(5.16.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Though the right hon Gentleman did not distinctly say so, I gathered from his words that this clergyman at Vienna is a member of the Church of England. Certainly the right hon. Gentleman must have done immense violence to his own feelings; he must have let his official capacity overwhelm his private capacity when he talked of that as the National Church. If I am not mistaken the right hon. Gentleman is a distinguished member of the Scottish National Church, an elder of that Church—a representative elder, I think—and that he should speak of the Church of England as the National Church is very strange. I imagine his doctrine is that abroad the religion of the majority should prevail, and that we ought to maintain chaplains for that majority. We are told that at Alexandria, which is, to a great extent, a Scotch colony, we retain a Scottish clergyman. Do we not maintain an English clergyman there? I should be very glad to know if that is the case. But as to the reason the right hon. Gentleman gave for maintaining an English clergyman at Vienna, I understand that the Austrian law is so illiberal that no one is to be allowed to officiate at religious services who is not an Austrian subject, unless he is a member of the Embassy.

*(5.12.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: No, I did not say that. I said that the Austrian law requires that the permanent pastors of the Churches recognised by the State shall be Austrian subjects.

(5.12.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Surely there can be no difficulty whatever in this matter. I do not wish to be irreverent, but I must say that these British clergymen abroad are really almost nuisances. You are persecuted. You cannot go to any of these places abroad without being bothered and pestered to subscribe to British clergymen. We get enough of religious ministrations at home, and when we go abroad we go for pleasure. Under these circumstances I shall certainly vote with my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton.

*(5.13.) MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucestershire, Cirencester): If my hon. Friend goes to a Division I shall vote with him. I fail to see why we should help to support Protestant England services in Vienna any more than in the eight or 10 German towns where there is Church of England service, and where English residents and visitors (working with an Association at home established for the purpose) support the services they want. I was worshipping in this church in Vienna, not many months ago, and I do not know why I was called upon to hand round the plate, but the result was most unsatisfactory. I will not betray confidence by saying what a miserable collection was made from that very respectable congregation, including an hon. Member of Parliament, who happens to be sitting opposite. But I feel strongly that people will not subscribe to religious ministrations when they find the State supplies it for them. There are Church of England churches on the Continent which are much more deserving of help, if you put the matter on that ground, than the church at Vienna, where there are plenty of people able, and who ought to be willing, to support it.

(5.15.) MR. LABOUCHERE: We are to understand that the real reason why we have to pay this chaplain is that he was appointed in 1817, and that the payment has continued from year to year, apparently without any protest. The English chaplain in Greece receives £100, and the gentleman in Denmark £200, and £115 of the latter sum is subscribed by the residents. Therefore, if it is necessary to have a chaplain at Vienna there is no reason why he should be paid £300 a year. The right hon. Gentleman has laid it down as a ground for our paying £300 to the chaplain in Vienna that the Church of England is in a majority in England. He is labouring under a mistake. The Church of England is not in a majority. The right hon. Gentleman says we ought to agree to this item of the Vote because we have an Established Church. I object entirely to an Established Church. I should like to see the Church disestablished and disendowed. I protest against this chaplaincy being maintained now because it has been maintained for a considerable number of years. Taking the question on its merits, there is no earthly reason why we should pay for this chaplain.

(5.18.) DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I do not think the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has displayed very great knowledge of the state of religion in Vienna or at home. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that most English people, when they go abroad, go to mass? The fact is, there is no necessity at all for these English pastors abroad; and certainly we, the Irish representatives, can hardly see why the Irish taxpayers should be called upon, the Church in Ireland being disestablished, to contribute towards the salary of the minister of a Church in which they do not believe. I hope my hon. Friend will press his Motion to a Division.

(5.19.) MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I think the right hon. Gentleman might give us the assurance that he will ascertain from Vienna whether some private subscription might not be obtained for the payment of a salary to the minister of the church. The Ambassador at Vienna has not any greater duties to perform than other Ambassadors; and I am not aware that the existing Ambassador has been so extravagant in his hospitality to the English people in Vienna that it is necessary for him to call on the country to pay for these exceptional services. If the right hon. Gentleman makes the inquiry I suggest we shall be able to judge next year whether there is any reason for a Vote for the maintenance of this chaplain. In the meantime, I entirely acquiesce in the views expressed by the hon. Member for Northampton.

*(5.20.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: The congregation maintains the church itself, though it does not pay the stipend, and it was for this reason that the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Winterbotham) performed the duties which he said were carried out by him so ineffectually.

(5.21.) The Committee divided; Ayes 69; Noes 134.—(Div. List, No. 45.)

Original Question again proposed.

(5.30.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: We have discussed the question of our Minister at one South American Republic, and I now turn to the question of our representation in a larger and more important Republic in South America; I mean the Republic of Brazil. A very large establishment is maintained at Rio. Here is a Minister at £4,000 a year, and the rent of a house £500; a Secretary at £700; a Consul at £1,000, and a Vice-Consul at £450. It is a very large establishment indeed. I would take the opportunity to ask whether we have now settled down to ordinary diplomatic relations with the Brazilian Republic, whether all question of acknowledging the Republic has been set at rest, and whether we are now on the same diplomatic footing with the *de facto* Government of Brazil as with any other country? Also, I should like to ask whether, now that a Republican form of Government is established in Brazil, it would not be possible to reduce the expenditure for our representation in that country to, at all events, the level of that which the Committee has sanctioned for the Argentine Republic? There is, no doubt, a considerable amount of show and ceremonial attending an Imperial Court, but that Court having ceased to exist in Brazil, no doubt the Ambassadorial expenses there will be considerably reduced. I know the country is large and important, but I do not know that our interests there are greater than in the Argentine Republic, and there is no great amount of British emigration to Brazil. I do not know what the Consul and Vice-Consul have to do in addition to what is done by the Minister, the Secretary, and the Under Secretary, but I think they must all have an easy time. It appears to me there is no necessity to keep up a Legation on such an extravagant scale, and I therefore move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £306,909, be granted for the said Service."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

*(5.35.) SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: The hon. Member is not quite correct in assuming that our relations with Brazil have been continued on the same footing as heretofore. The exact position is that until the provisional Government is ratified by the country, or, at all events, by a Representative Assembly, we, in common with other Powers, only recognise it as the *de facto* Government. I think the Committee will see that it would be an extremely invidious proceeding to alter the status and position of our Minister in Brazil, just because it has ceased to be an Empire, and has become a Republic. As to British interests in Brazil being small, I think it must be generally known that the reverse is the case, and an enormous amount of British capital has been invested in Brazil, and in a variety of ways our interests in that country are very large. I can assure the Committee that questions very frequently arise and call for the interposition of our Minister in Brazil, and these questions, require very careful handling indeed. Again, I must remind the Committee that these posts, and the pay attached, had the careful consideration of the Diplomatic and Consular Committee, and I do not think the Committee will consider the recommendations made are obsolete because the inquiry was made 19 years ago.

(5.39.) MR. W. REDMOND: It would be unfortunate, I think, if we, by any change in diplomatic representation, should seem to throw discredit on the present form of Government in Brazil, or to imply an opinion one way or the other upon the political change in Brazil. Among the items in respect to the Legation in Brazil I find £300 for the services of a translator, and we further find that this same gentleman holds the post of Vice Consul at Rio. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman what amount in addition to the £300 is paid for the Vice Consular duties? I presume that the translator is required to have a knowledge of the Spanish language; but would it not be perfectly possible to obtain a Secretary to the Legation with this knowledge, and so effect an economy of £300?

*(5.40.) MR. P. STANHOPE: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give us some assurance that Her Majesty's Government, while recognising the *de facto* Government in Brazil, will insure the careful watching of British interests by our Minister there. Those interests are very considerable. It must be generally known that many English companies have invested large capital in railway and other works in Brazil, and with, I think, hopeful prospects in the future. I am anxious there should be no semblance of discredit cast upon the future of Brazil, and I trust that Her

Majesty's Government will urge upon the Government of Brazil the desirability of upholding public credit in the interest of the country, and of British subjects who have invested their capital there.

*(5.41.) Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I am afraid I cannot, off-hand, tell the Committee the amount of the pay attached to the additional duties of the translator, but I will give the information on Report. I am sure the hon. Member will see it is not possible to anticipate all the questions that may be asked. As to the reason for the extra pay, I could recall many cases in which the translation and compilation of official papers in a foreign country require a knowledge that cannot be acquired in a short time, and indeed, knowledge of a technical character, and at certain posts it has been necessary, with every desire for economy, to retain the extra services of gentlemen as translators, for which they are paid in addition to the salary attaching to their ordinary duties. As to the question of the hon. Member for Wednesbury, undoubtedly Her Majesty's Representative in his informal relations with the *de facto* Government of Brazil will continue to look after British interests as heretofore; and I am glad to say he is on good terms with the existing Government, and as in former times obtains satisfaction whenever it has been required. It would be most unfortunate if, for a single day, those relations should be suspended.

(5.43.) Mr. W. REDMOND: I find here the information I sought, and it appears that this gentleman who gets £300 as translator receives also £450 as Vice Consul at Rio. This, I think, is an unsatisfactory way of distributing expenditure over the Estimates. Why not set down the payment in one item as £750? Anyone who did not take the trouble to examine the matter carefully would suppose that the payment is made to two men, whereas this official, in his double capacity, receives £50 a year more than the Secretary to the Legation. It seems to me to be an extravagant item. No doubt a translator must be thoroughly conversant with the Spanish language; but does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that in Brazil it is not possible to get the services of a gentleman thoroughly qualified for a salary of £500, and who would consider himself well paid for his services as Vice Consul and translator? But I have a doubt if it is possible for one man to discharge the double duty. In any case, I think the right hon. Gentleman might promise to communicate with the Head of the Legation in Brazil with a view to effecting an economy in expenditure under this head.

(5.46.) Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I only wish to disclaim the idea that a Republic requires an inferior representation to an Empire. All I suggested was that under a Republic there is less ceremonial, and Ambassadors have less expenses. We are represented by an Ambassador in the United States, and our relations with that Government are very important; but our Representative there receives less than do Ambassadors to France, Germany, Turkey, Russia, and other countries. The fact is, that under a Republic the habits of official life are simpler, and rightly so. My suggestion amounted to this: that as soon as matters are settled in Brazil the question of the salary for our Representative there should be re-considered.

(5.47.) Mr. W. REDMOND: I do not wish to press the matter unduly; but can the right hon. Gentlemen tell us that the one official can discharge the duties of both translator and Vice Consul; why the two salaries should not be entered as one item; and can he hold out any hope of an economy in this particular?

*(5.48.) Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: The fact is, these salaries are continually being revised, and whenever a post falls vacant any economy that can be made is effected. Very often the new officer appointed receives less salary than his predecessor, and the Committee will observe that occasionally where the work does not seem to require an officer of so high a grade a transfer of that officer is made to a place where there is more work and greater responsibility. The Committee may be assured that these Estimates are year by year narrowly examined by the Treasury, and no opportunity for effecting an economy is lost. On Report I shall be able to give the hon. Member the reasons for the arrangement in the case he mentions, and it certainly was made because, after consideration, it appeared the most economical and suitable.

MR. W. REDMOND: Then I have nothing more to say now.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

(5.53.) MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): There are one or two questions I should like to ask in regard to our relations with Foreign Powers upon matters connected with Africa. In this connection there have, of course, been difficulties which have prevented the right hon. Gentleman from answering questions, and though there was a short discussion during the debate upon the Address, I think we have shown every forbearance towards the Foreign Office and have given ample time for framing proposals for reasonable settlements of difficulties that have arisen on the Shiré River and in the Nyassa country. We anxiously look forward to a statement which will tell us how these difficulties have been met, and that some effectual form of Government has been established there. We also look forward to a settlement of the questions relating to the open navigation of the Zambesi. We are the more anxious for information in view of the alarming rumours from time to time published in the newspapers—I may instance the telegram from Zanzibar published this morning, which I hope has no foundation in fact. Then, further North on the African Continent, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he can make any statement that may tend to dispel disquieting rumours as to German movements and the conflict between the German and English companies on the South-East Coast? Only this day we have had rumours of a German offer to buy out the interest of the King of the Belgians on the Congo River. I would urge on Her Majesty's Government that they should as speedily as possible come to definite terms with the German Government as to spheres of influence and our mutual relations in South-East and Central Africa. It has been matter of interest and anxiety for a long time. In July, 1887, the German Association addressed a Petition to the Imperial Government expressing anxiety lest the expedition of Mr. Stanley should disturb their commercial interests. The German Government notified the complaint to Her Majesty's Government, and Lord Salisbury said that Her Majesty's Government were prepared to disclaim all annexation within the sphere of German influence if the German Government would act similarly towards Great Britain. I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether this understanding is intended to cover the claim put forward by Germany to the country lying between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyassa? I wish to urge upon the Government that there is a strong competition going on in that part of the world, and unless a clear decision is speedily arrived at with respect to the limitations of the influence of either Power, there is a prospect of very serious disagreement in the future.

(6.4.) COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): The fact is, that while Germany's sphere of influence is well marked to the North and South, it is very hazy to the West. I therefore join the hon. Member for Edinburgh in urging that steps should be taken at once to clear up the doubts which certainly exist, so that in the future no complications may arise between us and Germany. I should like to be informed whether the East Africa Company have absorbed the Lakes Company, as is reported. If it has, will the charter of the former company include the territory claimed by the latter? I am not favourable to these large companies. I view with considerable dislike the system of farming out the government of large tracts of territory to these companies, because it bristles with difficulties for the future.

*(6.8.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: It is necessary to be very reticent on questions of great national importance, and debates in the House on these tender questions might possibly complicate the negotiations in progress. It is desirable to avoid doing this. The hon. Member has asked me as to the relations between this country and Portugal in regard to South African affairs. As I stated to the House the other day there are some questions between Great Britain and Portugal which are as yet unsettled. For instance, Her Majesty's Government think Portugal has not fairly treated a British company in the seizure of the Delagoa Railway, and they expect that the company will receive just compensation, though the matter has not yet been

brought to a satisfactory conclusion. As to the rumours which have been current of the advance of Portuguese expeditions to the lakes, there is no reason to doubt the loyalty of the Portuguese Government to its engagements. With regard to the rumoured expedition to Mashonaland, the Portuguese Government have assured Her Majesty's Minister at Lisbon that they have no information whatever with regard to such an expedition. Telegrams received from Mozambique on the previous day made no mention of it. The Governor has, moreover, been instructed that the Portuguese Government will not sanction further operations in that region pending the negotiations now in progress. There is a report that a German expedition about to set out into Central Africa will affect British interests. I am, however, glad to state that the German Government have, unsolicited, assured Her Majesty's Government that the expedition under Emin Pasha is designed entirely to operate within the German sphere and will not at all prejudice British interests, as the German Government fully recognise the demarcation which has reserved to each Power a sphere of influence. Two Powers in such a position as Germany and Great Britain have lately occupied have never acted with more perfect loyalty to each other and with a greater absence of friction, and I am quite sure we may rely on it that the German Government will take no steps prejudicial to our interests. The region between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyassa is undoubtedly one in which Great Britain has great reason to take an interest, as it has been the scene of the enterprise of some very noble British subjects. No definite arrangement has been made with regard to that region, but I hope that the House will feel assured that British interests run no risk from the conduct of allies who have hitherto shown such perfect loyalty. I now think that I have answered all the questions which have been put to me.

(6.14.) MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): What is the position of the negotiations with regard to the Oil Rivers, and what action have Her Majesty's Government taken in respect to that district?

*(6.14.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I must first answer a question which I forgot to notice. The Government have no information about the absorption of the Lakes Company by the East Africa Company. It has been rumoured that this is to take place; but, so far as I am aware, no definite arrangement has been come to. No decision has yet been arrived at about the administration of the Oil Rivers. The House will, however, be made aware of the Government's intentions in time to allow of any objections being made before final steps are taken. I hope that it will not be long before a satisfactory arrangement is concluded.

(6.15.) COMMANDER BETHELL: We all know that prevention is better than cure; and I hold that, unless the respective spheres of influence are defined in the West, there will be trouble very soon. I do not care whether one company has been absorbed by the other or not; but it is desirable it should be known what is the policy of the Government towards the absorbing company, how far it can claim the benefit of the terms of the charter, and whether the powers given by the charter extend north of the Zambesi. I wish for an assurance that the terms of the charter do not extend to the region that has been more or less occupied by the African Lakes Company.

(6.17.) MR. BUCHANAN: I wish to know whether Her Majesty's Government have formulated any idea as to the future government of Nyassaland and the district of the Shiré Highlands. I would earnestly urge upon the Foreign Office the extreme desirability—nay, even the absolute necessity—of coming to some definite arrangement with Germany at as early a date as possible with reference to the limits of the respective spheres of influence of the two countries. What one reads from day to day makes it quite clear that the seed is being sown of an endless crop of troubles. It does great credit to those who have had the conduct of delicate negotiations that so far there has been no serious disagreement between those who represent the two Governments; but as things are going on the future cannot be looked forward to with any confidence, and the sooner we come to a clear understanding with Germany the better it will be for all concerned.

(6.19.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I think that the right hon. Gentleman ought now to give a clear explanation about the South Africa Company, as to which I have several times asked him questions. From the terms of the charter I have never been able to understand what are the powers of the company. It appears to have vague territorial rights over Matabeleland, Makolololand, and possibly the Shiré Highlands; but what the rights of the company are I cannot discover. For example, I cannot tell whether it may exclude all other persons engaged in trade. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will explain this, and also what would happen in case Lobengula, King of Matabeleland——

(6.20.) MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): I rise to a point of order. Can this matter be discussed on this Vote?

THE CHAIRMAN: It certainly does come within the sphere of the Vote, but I think the discussion would be more appropriate on the South African Vote which follows.

(6.21.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: This ruling illustrates the extreme inconvenience of lumping a great number of subjects in one Vote, and the framing of the Estimates makes it extremely difficult to discuss any particular point. Evidently a good deal ot scrambling is going on for territory in Africa, and precautions ought to be taken that the scramble does not provoke bad blood and difficulty. There is, I am convinced, extreme danger in letting loose companies with vague and indefinite powers, and care ought to be taken that they do not involve their respective Governments in serious misunderstandings. Where you have territorial companies you ought to define the territory within which each shall operate and not give them vague charters which enable them to assume all kinds of rights. I hope and trust, therefore, that the various spheres of influence will soon be clearly defined, and that thus future difficulties will be avoided. I do not sympathise much with the claims of Portugal, who has already got more territory than she can control; but we are bound by the Berlin Treaty to submit to arbitration the difficulty which has arisen with that country, and we are taking a somewhat high-handed course in simply saying to Portugal, "Hands off! You shall not touch the territory in question." I trust that this difficulty will be settled in a manner creditable to our good name.

*(6.27.) GENERAL SIR LEWIS PELLY (Hackney, N.): There is no doubt of the goodwill of the German Government towards Her Majesty's Government, but the time has arrived when some clear definition of our respective boundaries should be amicably arrived at. It is all very well to say that certain boundaries have been laid down, but in practice questions and disputes are constantly arising, and such disputes might easily produce great inconvenience. It is not very clear how far the sphere of British influence extends in different directions. It seems to me it might be arranged that representatives of the companies interested and Delegates of the respective Governments should meet amicably in conference and agree as to boundaries, and these might be laid down on maps, and copies given to all concerned.

(6.29.) MR. W. REDMOND: The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has several times spoken of "spheres of influence." I think it would be a satisfaction if we could hear once for all what we are to understand by a "sphere of influence." Does it mean a territory or a district which this country is bound to defend against any other? I hold that the dispute with Portugal arose out of the vagueness of the phrase ' sphere of influence." If the right hon. Gentleman will give some explanation to the House on these points, he may be able to satisfy the minds of those who regard with some apprehension the present position of this country in regard to its African responsibilities.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway): I would point out that we had a lesson with regard to our relations with South Africa some 10 years ago. I refer to the fact that in consequence of the attempt of the Government, which was unfortunately successful, to stop discussion in regard to the Zulu War, we were led into a second war, and so had two wars instead of one. According to the speech made by the Prime Minister at the beginning of this year, the affairs of

Africa were interesting European Powers to such an extent that the African Question had become at that moment an European Question. Having studied this matter somewhat attentively I should like to hear the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs clear up the question as to the principle on which it is intended to settle the different spheres of influence of the European Powers. According to what has happened in the case of Portugal it would appear that the possession of the seaboard outside the sphere of Portuguese influence does not give the right to interference in regard to the interior; but, on the other hand, our whole case in regard to the question that has arisen with reference to Germany is that the possession of the seaboard does give a right of access to the interior territory. Thus it will be seen that we are conducting a diplomatic argument with two different Powers on what is practically the same point, but on absolutely opposite principles. I hope the right hon. Baronet will be able to tell us on what principle we are defining these different spheres of influence. Whether it is right or wrong that we should occupy certain portions of the interior of Africa is a matter of little consequence, as compared with the enormous dangers and expense that will be incurred by any Government that may hold such a position. As has already been pointed out, there is nothing so likely to prevent European Powers from being dragged into future wars in regard to the administration of African territory as the proper definition of the spheres of influence accorded to each Power. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs ought to take the House into his confidence and tell us something of the principles on which he is settling these questions. At present we have no quarrel with Germany, and we ought to get some information from the Government on this very important question.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College Division): I should like to have some explanation from the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs as to the Nyassa district. It is stated that missionaries out there have recently been engaged in very warlike operations, in regard to which we should like to have some definite information from Her Majesty's Government. We find that the Consul at Nyassa receives £500 a year, while there is also a Consul at Quillimane, who has been imprisoned for some contravention of the Portuguese law, and two Vice Consuls in the African mainlands serving with the army of the missionaries, who have been fighting against the Arabs. Now, we should like to know who these gentlemen are. Last year the position was this: Some of these missionaries and some military officers belonging to Her Majesty's Army were engaged in a filibustering war against the Arabs, for which I do not blame them; but I think I am entitled to press Her Majesty's Government to define what was their position in regard to this matter, and what they think are the actual rights and wrongs of the missionaries. It is stated that they commenced their operations in self-defence, that then they asked Her Majesty's Government for protection, and were told that if they protected themselves they would only be doing what men in such a situation had a right to do. The consequence was that they did protect themselves, with great valour and energy, as any other set of men would do who were fighting for their lives; but at this point a diplomatic dispute arose in connection with the Vice Consul at Quillimane. The Portuguese refused to permit the importation of arms and ammunition for their defence, and, while our Government were encouraging them to defend themselves, the Portuguese Government—according to the Portuguese Report—had, at the instigation of Her Majesty's Government, laid down regulations forbidding the importation of gunpowder and weapons by way of Quillimane or other portions of the Portuguese territory. The consequence was that our own subjects were prevented from obtaining arms and ammunition, while it was alleged that the Portuguese were allowing arms and gunpowder to be sent in for the use of the Arabs to any extent they might require. It was because of the alleged improper importation of gunpowder and arms that our Vice Consul was imprisoned, and that imprisonment means a very long time, because the Vice Consul would have to appeal to the Lisbon Authorities to get his sentence reversed, or confirmed, as the case might be, and await the result. I ask the right hon. Baronet to inform the Committee whether the Vice Consul at Quillimane has been got out of the mess into which he has been drawn, or whether he still remains with the legal sword of the Portuguese hanging over his head? The right hon. Baronet has told us that while British interests in that district are watched over by Her Majesty's Government we need have no anxiety; but I say that it is just when they are watched over by Her Majesty's Government that we have the greatest anxiety, and it is for this reason and because of the oracular and sphinx-like nature of the reply given to my hon. Friend behind me that I venture to ask the right hon. Baronet for more definite information.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am sure the hon. Gentleman has no wish that I should enter at length into matters that have been lately in dispute between Her Majesty's Government and that of Portugal, so as to run the risk of reviving the irritation which I trust is in the course of being allayed; but I should be sorry to be thought unduly reticent by withholding information which I am able to give in terms that I hope may be satisfactory to the House. I have been questioned as to the division of the territory in the neighbourhood of Nyassa, and the arrangement for the administration of the district. I have to say that I am not at present in a position to make a declaration on that subject. It is evident that the arrangements for the administration of these regions must be a matter of very careful consideration; and I think hon. Gentlemen will see that I should be acting very improperly were I to make a premature declaration on this subject. It is a difficult subject, and of course it is dependent upon other negotiations which have not been brought to a conclusion. I think it would be extremely desirable that the spheres of influence of the various Powers in Africa should be defined, but obviously that is an object which cannot be accomplished in a short time. It is only lately that we have been able to effect limitations with the French in Western Africa, and we hope that result will be found extremely beneficial for the profitable exercise of our respective influences and the avoidance of disputes. But it may be a long time before that will be brought about everywhere. It is not to be wondered at that, when various Powers are pushing their influence in regions never before reached, it should not be found possible at once to define the territories. The hon. Member for Fermanagh asked what is meant by "sphere of influence." A "sphere of influence," I take it, is founded upon an agreement made between the Powers concerned. For instance, there may be a declaration of a sphere of influence between two Powers which may not affect a third Power's influence, like the agreement made between the Portuguese and the Germans with respect to abstention from the exercise of their respective influence beyond a certain line. In that case it was a declaration of abstention as regards another Power. In the same way, the respective spheres of influence of Great Britain and of Germany are defined in North-Eastern Africa, so that our colonising and administrative operations and theirs may not clash one with the other. The object of declaring a "sphere of influence" is to avoid collision with other Powers, and I hope that, as far as the declaration of the spheres of influence have gone, they will prove profitable in that direction. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy has declared himself against entrusting companies with colonising operations. Nothing I can say would alter his opinion upon that point, but it is a policy which was not adopted by Her Majesty's present Government. We have succeeded to arrangements made by our predecessors, and have ourselves made others of a similar kind. As I understand that policy, it is to regulate and control the settlement of our countrymen in uncivilised countries, so that they may avoid the errors which have often been committed in times past. Such powers may be exercised by the companies, whom we know and whom we can control. The Committee will remember that under the Royal Charters there can be no administration or question of settlement without the sanction or control of Her Majesty's Government. My hon. Friend asked a question with regard to the amalgamation of these two companies, and inquired what would be their rights under the Royal Charters. There has been hitherto no question of granting any charter to these companies in the interior of Africa. These companies are voluntary associations at present; they assume and regulate their own responsibility. We have nothing to say to their amalgamation, because they are bodies over whom we have no control. If they amalgamate for their own purposes, and then approach Her Majesty's Government with the view of obtaining certain powers, then arises a question whether they ought to possess those powers. But that is a question which has not been considered.

Commander BETHELL: Is it the case that the South African Company are not bounded on the North at all, and that it is provided in their charter that they may extend on the North?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I believe that is the case. Similarly there is no boundary line by which the East African Company are confined. But I would point out to the House that it is not desirable that these matters should be too closely discussed, for it is manifest that such discussions must touch the interests of other countries. It has been remarked that I have been very reticent in these matters, and I would observe that it is not unreasonable I should be so. The hon. Member for Northampton asked what are the rights of the South African Company. They are limited to the terms of the Charter, and they will be answerable to Her Majesty's Government for the way in which they exercise their powers. Judging by other companies' successes, I hope these Chartered Companies have a future before them, and that they will lead to an extension of British dominions and protection in the regions in which they operate. The hon. Member for Glasgow wished for an explanation of the presence of the Consul at Mozambique and in the neighbouring districts. One Consul was appointed in the Nyassa district; the other happened to be travelling in the country, and, with much courage and devotion, he rendered assistance to the handful of Europeans who were maintaining an unequal contest. It is true that a military officer took part, but I hardly think it worthy to call the strife in which they were engaged as a "filibustering expedition." The British, and the tribes friendly to them, were attacked by slave traders, who, with fire and sword, spread desolation through those regions of Africa, and when they saw danger imminent, they were compelled to stand on their defence. With regard to the imprisonment of the Consul at Mozambique, I am happy to say that it was a mere trifling and ephemeral matter. He was a gentleman who acted for a time as unpaid Vice-Consul. We have a great many about the world who perform the necessary duties merely for the fees. This gentleman, in his private capacity, received the consignment of rockets for the service of the Lake Company. He made, as he thought, an honest declaration of the consignment to the Local Authorities. He was arrested, but before the day was over he was released, and there was an end of the incident. I think I have answered all the questions, and I hope the Committee will not consider it necessary to go further into matters which have lately caused some little difficulty between two countries so long friendly as Great Britain and Portugal, but leave the settlement of points which are still in question between us, without the risk of publicity, to be brought to a conclusion, which is not, I hope, far distant, and which may restore the friendly relations which I trust will always subsist between the two countries.

Dr. CAMERON: I want to know something about the Nyassa District. When I used the word "filibustering" I thought it conveyed a much more definite idea than do the words "sphere of influence." "Filibustering" means the fighting of certain persons without their being commissioned by any recognised Government. That was the case with the fighting in Nyassaland. What I want to know is this: If you get these "spheres of influence" defined how are the people within them to be governed? By these Chartered Companies? If so, we should have some guarantee that they will be responsible to the Government of Great Britain. What I complain of is that at the present moment they are not in that position at all. The Consul or Representative of the Government has no power. He had no official position among these men who were fighting for their lives; he had no control over them; and the consequence was that these British subjects were engaged in what was neither more nor less than filibustering. I must say it appears to me to be a matter deserving of some consideration that the right hon. Gentleman does not seem to be aware of the seriousness of such a state of matters. Only a few years back I had occasion to call attention to an occurrence in the same district, where some missionaries took extraordinary powers into their own hands, punishing natives most severely for certain offences against chastity. Because the natives had their own ideas as to what was right and wrong these missionaries inflicted on them most atrocious punishment, absolutely beating some of them to death. We were told that these matters brought them within the scope of our law, and that a Mission would go from Zanzibar to the scene of the disorder. However, the person charged with the Mission fell ill, and nothing was done. Having seen such things going on for a series of years, and having seen a prolonged system of fighting taking place for another series of years, knowing that this country takes a great interest in these people and will not see them abandoned, and knowing that these people are open to a recurrence of such dangers, I say that we ourselves may be landed in a mess unless we take the matter in hand and establish some permanent form of Government. The answer the right hon. Gentleman gives me is that nothing has been done, and that nothing is to be done. I say the Government have made Chartered Companies. These companies derive their rights from you. Are you going to give them rights over the territory occupied by these missionaries and the population they have drawn up around them; are you going to leave these people governed by responsible companies able to defend them if attacked in the exercise of their legal powers; or do you intend to leave things to drift on as they have drifted for years past in a manner which, sooner or later, is sure to embroil the relations of this country with those of other countries who have interests in this part of the world?

(7.4.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: A little time ago I made some observations as to the South African Companies, and you, Sir, quite rightly held that those observations were not in order, though I should be able to make them when we got more to the Consular part of this Vote. But the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary has answered one or two of the observations I made, so I presume it will be convenient for me to refer to those matters now. The right hon. Gentleman put forward as an excuse that some of these charters were granted by previous Governments; but that is no answer to hon. Members sitting in this part of the House, who take up a perfectly independent attitude, and oppose such charters no matter by what Government granted. We have opposed them when Liberal Governments have been in power precisely as we oppose them when Conservative Governments are in power. I tried a short time back to discover how these charters are given. So far as I can see, they are granted in the loosest possible manner. Some gentleman, presumably with influence, goes to, I suppose, the Colonial Secretary and says, "We want a charter." There is no opposition. No one knows that the charter is being asked for until it is granted; and as those who ask for it are persons of some influence, it seems an almost necessary consequence of asking for a charter that it should be given. With respect to this South African Charter last Session, there were certain grants made by Lobengula, the chief King of Matabeleland, to Mr. Cecil Rhodes. I asked several questions about the matter——

(7.7.) The CHAIRMAN: I pointed out before that the question of the sphere of action of these Chartered Companies would come more properly under a later Vote dealing with South Africa. It may be dealt with here in so far as the territory embraced in the charter touches territory also affected by the Consular Vote, but you cannot on this Vote discuss the policy of the original granting of a charter.

(7.8.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I understand, Sir. As to the matter before us, let us have some clear understanding as to how far the "sphere of influence," if you like to call it so, extends. What has been the answer of the Under Secretary? He says the House ought to be very reticent about these charters, as ill-advised publicity may get us into trouble with other nations. He seems to think that it is the Foreign Office and not this House who has to settle these matters. It seems to me that both this House and Foreign Governments ought to know how far the sphere of influence of these companies extends. It should be specifically stated how far the territorial authority of each company extends. I should like to ask the Under Secretary whether, in the case of this latest company, it is a fact that there is no specified line of delimitation—is the Zambesi the boundary, and, if not, what is the line of demarcation? It is most desirable to lay down definite frontier lines between the sphere of influence of each European country; or else, by the action of one of these companies, we may find ourselves involved in war with France, Germany, Portugal, or some other European nation.

*(7.10.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: I thought I had indicated what the answer is on this point. I thought I gave the Committee to understand that the interior frontier of this company has not been definitely limited; but let me say that the company working this Royal Charter will be closely watched and will not be allowed to commit any acts that might involve us with Foreign Powers. Any step which it might desire to take which would seriously endanger our relations with Foreign Powers would not receive the sanction of the Home Government, under whose control the company is.

(7.11.) Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I should like to put a question about a matter which my hon. Friend the Member for the Market Harborough Division brought before the House last Session. I would ask whether there is any likelihood of a relaxation of the extremely inconvenient regulations restraining British medical men from practising in Switzerland?

*(7.12.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: I have heard several complaints on this head. It is, no doubt, a hardship on our fellow-countrymen in Switzerland that they cannot always avail themselves of the services of British medical men, but the medical profession is a close one in all European countries. In Switzerland Her Majesty's Government have been unable to come to satisfactory terms with the Swiss Authorities, mainly owing to there being no equivalent to be given to the Swiss in return for the relaxation of the objectionable regulations. An arrangement has, however, been come to in favour of British medical men regularly living in Switzerland. I am afraid, however, that it is not possible to get rid of the main grievance the hon. Member refers to.

(7.14.) Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I would point out that, according to my own knowledge, last year an English medical man was fined 500 francs for giving medical advice to a lady staying at the same hotel in the Engadine.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: That medical gentleman was not one of those in whose favour the relaxation was made.

(7.16.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I think the Swiss Authorities are quite right. There are a lot of quacks in England, and precautions are taken in this country against their palming themselves off as fully-qualified medical men. How are the Swiss to know whether an alleged British medical man is really qualified or not? Why should not an English doctor who goes abroad be required to show to some Authority there that he knows something of his profession? The examination English doctors are required to pass in Switzerland is a very simple one, and I am assured that only the greatest ignoramus would fail under it. I have seen a good deal of English doctors abroad. Generally speaking, they are little men who cannot get on at home. They call themselves "Dr.," get puffed by their friends, and secure a practice, and end by killing and destroying far more than the native doctors in their own country. I hope nothing will be done to urge Switzerland to do away with the excellent regulations she has laid down in this matter.

(7.17.) Mr. P. STANHOPE: I must take exception to the items for clerk allowances in the case of Chili, Mexico, Peru, Roumania, Servia, and other places. In my opinion, Chili and Bulgaria would be excellent schools for some of the young attachés. We have 56 second and third secretaries, who seem to enjoy themselves in the larger capitals. In Paris there are five, in Vienna five, in Berlin five, and so on. Many of them I believe to be redundant. In Bulgaria Mr. O'Conor has done excellent service, and a young attaché would be greatly benefited by being placed under a man of his experience. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by striking out £250 clerk allowance for Chili.

(7.20.) THE CHAIRMAN: The reduction must be on the General Vote.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £307,359, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Philip Stanhope.*)

*(7.20.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I can only say that the junior members of the Service are sent where it is thought they can be most usefully employed. It would be a mistake to suppose that the attachés and junior secretaries at the Embassies are not sufficiently employed. I know that more than once during the last four years certain Ambassadors have had to ask for further assistance on account of the pressure of the work devolving on them. The Mission in Bulgaria is on a temporary footing, and we have not yet been able to enter into official relations with the Bulgarian Government under the present Prince.

(7.22.) MR. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I should like to draw attention to the practice—which has now grown to considerable dimensions—of drafting into the Service men who have had no previous experience of it or connection with it. I desire to obtain some explanation of the fact that student interpreters in the Levant have been reduced in number. I should like to know whether the reduction has been made because the Government consider that the student interpreters have not been of any real assistance. I can only assure the Government that in the opinion of those best entitled to judge they have been found of great value.

*(7.24.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I do not think it has yet been decided whether the number of student interpreters in the Levant shall be increased or not. At present, I believe, it is thought that there are enough of them for the Service.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

(7.25.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I was about to move the reduction of the Vote for the Chargé d'Affaires at Darmstadt and also at Coburg. The right hon. Gentleman has anticipated me with regard to Darmstadt, by saying that the position there was not to be filled up. I hope he will be able to make a similar statement with regard to Coburg.

*(7.26.) SIR J. FERGUSSON was understood to say that there was only a subordinate agent at Coburg.

(7.26.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: Why should there be a Chargé d'Affaires at Coburg?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: It is necessary to have an officer to attend to the interests of British subjects in certain places. There have been one or two cases in which I can assure the hon. Gentleman that people who came to me were very thankful, indeed, for the good offices which were performed.

(7.27.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I quite see that someone must look after British subjects, but usually that officer is designated a Consul.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Consuls are usually appointed only where there are sufficiently large commercial relations to make their services necessary. There are no Consuls at the minor German capitals.

(7.28.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: In this Vote by far the largest sum comes under the head of Turkey. It is, perhaps, necessary and proper that it is so, because the responsibility of this country with regard to Turkey is of a different, and in some respects a more important, character than with regard to any other European country. It is now 11 years since the late Lord Beaconsfield and the present Prime Minister arrived at Charing Cross and received a great ovation on their announcing that they brought back "peace with honour." I feel it rather difficult to reconcile that boast with the attitude which the Government have taken up with regard to a portion, at least, of the subjects of the Sultan.—I mean the inhabitants of Armenia. The Armenians were entitled, under the Treaty of 1856, to look to this country and other European Powers for a certain amount of intervention and protection against the barbarities and atrocities to which they had long been subject. At the time that Treaty was passed Greece, Crete, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria were in many respects on the same footing as Armenia; and with respect to every one of those Provinces of the Turkish Empire, the intervention of this country has not been withheld. With regard, however, to Armenia, where the Christian subjects have probably suffered more than in any other portion of the territory of the Porte, this country has failed to do what appears to be its plain duty. By the Treaty of San Stefano, Russia undertook certain responsibilities with respect to the Christian subjects of the Porte in Asia. But that responsibility was set aside, and a new responsibility was adopted by the Great Powers which met at the Berlin Congress. By the 61st Article of the Berlin Treaty the Signatory Powers undertook not only to secure protection to the inhabitants of Armenia against the Circassians and the Kurds, but to obtain from the Porte guarantees in the shape of local reforms which were necessary for that purpose, and, at the instance of Lord Salisbury, there were specially added to the 61st Article words which threw on the Porte the obligation of furnishing the other Signatory Powers with Reports from time to time as to the measures to be taken in order to effect those objects. The Powers undertook by the same Treaty to supervise the application of the reforms. How has that engagement been carried out? It is impossible for the right hon. Gentleman to repudiate, as he has attempted to do, any special responsibility on the part of this country in respect of Turkey. The responsibility is concomitant with our authority and power, and must be measured by it. It is useless to pretend that the country does not practically guarantee the integrity of the Turkish Empire. If it were not for Great Britain, unquestionably the fabric of the Turkish Empire would have been, in the last 10 years, much more seriously broken than it has been, if not irretrievably ruined by forces which are only too well recognised. The Armenians have special claims upon this country, and upon Lord Salisbury, in this particular matter, because they received, at the time of the Congress of Berlin, special and direct acknowledgement from his Lordship, not only of the direct interest which the Government of Her Majesty took in their condition, but that his own personal efforts should not be wanting in order to secure the needed reforms. What has been done since? Absolutely nothing. Atrocities of the most horrible description on men, women, and children, have been perpetrated without number. In Erzeroum, Van, and Mush, it is the ordinary every-day lot of the Christians not only to be assaulted and robbed by the Kurds, but to suffer every kind of exaction at the hands of the Turkish authorities. We have had furnished to us a Blue Book which contains, among other things, a long account of the trial of one of the greatest ruffians who ever disgraced Turkish annals—I mean Moussa Bey. That man has been acquitted of the charges brought against him, and it is reported in the Blue Book that the trial was little better than a farce, and that the Procureur General, instead of being a prosecuting officer, was practically an advocate for the accused, and bullied and brow-beat the witnesses against Moussa Bey, so that they were practically afraid to give evidence. We are told that our Ambassador will endeavour to procure a further trial, but we have heard nothing of any definite step being taken on the subject. We know that some of Moussa's associates and supporters in Armenia have been decorated, and that the very brother of this ruffian has been engaged in predatory attacks and outrages on the Christian population in the neighbourhood of Bitlis. The unfortunate people are driven by the inaction of Her Majesty's Government to cast their eyes in a totally different direction for protection—I mean in the direction of Russia. Russia has already absorbed a portion of that which was formerly Armenia, and the armed forces of Russia are looking over the walls, as it were, into the Armenian quarters. The Armenians have no desire to come under the authority or the rule of the Czar. They are perfectly willing to remain subjects of the Sultan. All they ask is that they should be allowed such local and domestic administration as shall protect them from the exactions of the Turkish officials and from the predatory attacks of the Kurds. They do not, unfortunately, perhaps, for themselves, do what the Bosnians or the Bulgarians or Herzegovenians did. They have not had recourse to insurrection. It is true there have been little local riots, but there has been nothing in the way of organised resistance. But the action of Her Majesty's Government practically teaches them that if, like others, they will only resort to armed insurrection, they will attract the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and possibly of other Powers, and secure that which their present attitude renders practically hopeless. If you do not interfere, how long do you expect the Government of the Czar to stand idly by? Surely it is high time the Government of the Queen brought some pressure on the Porte to secure not merely the punishment of isolated ruffians like Monssa Bey, but to secure some of those administrative reforms and guarantees which not only the Porte undertook to bring about, but which the Signatory Powers promised to see carried out. I do not want to move a reduction of the Vote, because I suppose it would only be a formality. Possibly the observations I have made will be sufficient to evoke from the right hon. Gentleman something definite in the way of a reply.

(7.44.) Mr. LEVESON-GOWER (Stoke-on-Trent): In reference to the question of the state of Armenia, I take leave to recall to the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman a statement as to the outrages and violations of women, and murders and robberies, which took place but a short time ago in the district mentioned by the hon. Member for East Donegal. When I asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he would give instructions for an inquiry to be made as to the truth or otherwise of the reports he said he could not undertake to make any inquiry upon third-hand rumours. The accounts had a very definite source. They were contained in a letter written by the chief Ecclesiastical Authority at Van to the Patriarch of Armenia, and by him transmitted to the Porte; and it seems to me that, under these circumstances, there are two courses open to Her Majesty's Government, either to direct Sir William White, at Constantinople, to go direct to the Porte and inquire into the truth of the statements, or else to direct the Consuls whose salaries are included in the Vote to make inquiries on the spot and report to Her Majesty's Government. I know the Government are fond of replying that they do not attach very much importance to newspaper reports, but let me remind the Committee that precisely the same answer was given when the accounts of the outrages in Bulgaria first appeared in the *Daily News*. The hon. Member for East Donegal has shown with great clearness that Armenia has special claims on this country, in consequence not only of the Treaty of 1856, but of the arrangement of 1878. The Porte gave a distinct promise to Her Majesty's Government that they would institute certain reforms in the management of Armenia. How far those reforms have been carried out has been shown by the form of trial adopted in the case of Moussa Bey. Unless the right hon. Gentleman can give the Committee some assurance that some steps will be taken to inquire into the truth of the rumours, and that, if they are found to be true, some representation will be made to the Porte, with a view of preventing a recurrence of the outrages, I shall feel it my duty to move a reduction of the Vote by £500.

(7.48.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I never agree with the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) in thinking that we ought to interfere in Armenia. I have not the slightest doubt there are great atrocities in Armenia, and that the Turkish Government is one of the vilest Governments that ever existed in the civilised world, but the difficulty is to know how we ought to interfere. My hon. Friend the Member for Stoke has just said we have the right of intervention by the Treaty of 1878. Yes, but that treaty was a reciprocal treaty. We obtained the right to interfere, that is to say, the Turks engaged that they would properly govern Asia Minor, and, on the other hand, we guaranteed to the Turks the whole of Asia Minor against the attacks of the whole world. I objected altogether to that treaty. I object to it now. I do not consider whether the Turks misgovern or govern well in Armenia, but I maintain that we ought in no sort of way to give them a territorial guarantee of their position in Asia Minor. That representations should be made to the Turkish Government to the effect that Europe is shocked at the treatment of the Armenians, I could well understand, but it seems to me we ought not to make the representation separately, and base our intervention on the Treaty of 1878. I think we ought, moreover, with the other European Powers, to tell the

Turkish Government that they have absolutely failed in properly governing Armenia, and that now and for henceforth we absolutely refrain from any species of guarantee or promise or hope that we will come to their aid if they are attacked by Russia. My hon. Friend (Mr. Leveson-Gower) says we ought to make a complaint. But suppose the Turks replied, "Whether we govern ill or well, it is not your affair," would my hon. Friend suggest that we should intervene? [Mr. Leveson-Gower: No.] Then what does my hon. Friend suggest? I do not see what would come of this intervention. That is why I think we ought to exercise the very greatest caution in making any isolated complaint to Turkey on the misgovernment of Armenia.

(7.52.) Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I think my hon. Friend does not take sufficient account of the moral responsibility placed on this country with regard to Armenia. As a matter of fact, the Armenians would have been properly protected by the Treaty of St. Stefano in its original form, but, owing to the intervention of Lord Beaconsfield and the Marquess of Salisbury, the protection given to those people was partially withdrawn. By the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin the Porte engaged to carry out, without any delay, the improvements and reforms which were demanded by the local needs in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and the Kurds. And the Article went on to provide that the Porte would periodically publish the Reports of the measures taken for the information of the Powers who were to superintend the application of those measures. There is no doubt that we are one of the Powers entitled to receive Reports, and that, secondly, we are bound to superintend the application of those measures. The possession of Cyprus is, I think, sufficient ground for our insisting that Turkey shall carry out reforms in Armenia. Let me say I find nothing whatever in the Blue Book presented with reference to the trial of Moussa Bey in respect to which blame can be cast on the Marquess of Salisbury or Sir William White, for Sir William White has shown that he is earnestly desirous that the man should be properly tried, and he has shown sufficiently his profound dissatisfaction with the manner in which that trial has been conducted. And the Marquess of Salisbury wrote to Sir William White:—

> "Her Majesty's Government rely on your Excellency not to relax your endeavours to have justice done in this case. They leave it to your discretion to take every fitting opportunity to impress upon the Government of the Sultan the danger of allowing the continuance of such a state of things as has been shown to exist in the districts of Van, Bitlis, and Mush. All the Sultan's subjects, whether Christian or Mohammedan, have a right to be protected against outrage to their persons and property, and unless they can obtain proper remedy in the Courts of Justice the discontent caused by failure to get redress will constitute a serious danger to the Ottoman Empire."

The Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the Under Secretary will really be acting in full accord with the excellent sentiment expressed in these sentences if they will intervene, as my hon. Friend advises them to do, in an effective manner in the gross ill-treatment to which the Armenians are constantly being subjected. I assume the Under Secretary agrees with the statements of Colonel Chermside. Colonel Chermside cannot be accused of unduly favouring the Armenians, because in some sentences are strong condemnations of the reports made by the Armenians as gross exaggerations. For instance, he denies that outrage exists to any very great extent; but, at the same time, he makes several statements which show that the security of the property and the person of the Armenians is very small indeed in the districts in question. One sentence fully sustains the contention of Lord Salisbury that the treatment of the unhappy Armenians is a very great danger, not only to the Turkish Empire, but to the peace of the whole world, because, unquestionably, if this kind of things goes on much longer you will have a spirit of sympathy amongst the Christians of Russia that will force the hands of the Government there, as it forced the hands of the Government previously in the case of Bulgaria. This is what Colonel Chermside says—

> "As education develops, the Armenians, who look to the Western nations as their model, become more and more discontented with the Oriental civilisation in which they find themselves. The uneducated classes are merely loyal as far as influenced by the educated. The old race and religious antipathy to Kurd and Moslem exists. Their sympathies are with any Christian Power as

against the Turk. The educated, from their habits of intrigue and mutual jealousies, are as incompetent as ever to combine, and the poorer classes have no power, being rarely armed, and being surrounded by a majority of the hostile and dominant religion. The Turks, however, are quite correct, in my opinion, in considering them disaffected. The formation, a few years since, of Secret Societies and Committees near Erzeroum, and in other districts, the proposals and attempts to procure arms, the occurrences of recent years at and near Van, all indicate the true sentiments of disaffection. It would indeed be strange were it otherwise."

I think the Under Secretary will agree that this Report of Colonel Chermside is dictated by a spirit of the greatest moderation and careful examination. The position is this: a population in a state of insecurity, irritation, and disaffection; a neighbouring nation professing the same creed, and this nation every day excited by a course of ill treatment of their co-religionists; and we in this country have the power, voluntarily assumed, because the transformation of the Treaty of San Stefano was mainly the act of England, to interpose on behalf of the Armenians. It is our duty to check this mal-administration, and our responsibility is strong. I hope the matter will not be dismissed by a reference to want of authenticity in the reports. This is a thing any Tory Minister should avoid. There is no more shocking example of such an error than the historic speech of Lord Beaconsfield in which he so dismissed the original reports of the Bulgarian atrocities. I hope the right hon. Gentleman's reply will show that the Government recognise their responsibility, and are willing to do their best to obtain something like justice and security for the long persecuted Christians in Armenia.

(8.0.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I must say my view is very nearly that of the hon. Member for Northampton. I believe it is hopeless to expect good Turkish administration. The Turkish Empire is rotten, and the Sultan is an incapable ruler, who rejects all attempts to popularise government. We cannot expect good government in Turkey until it is purified by revolution. Inasmuch as the Porte has failed absolutely and entirely to fulfil its obligations under the Treaty of 1878, we are entirely absolved from any obligation we incurred under that Treaty; our hands are free, we are not bound to support that rotten Empire when attacked. In Armenia it is not only the will but the power that is wanting to carry out promised reforms. Under the Treaty of 1878 the obligations of the Porte are clear, and it bound itself to give a Constitution similar to that of Crete and of the European provinces of Turkey. But neither in Armenia or Macedonia have the obligations been fulfilled. In Macedonia the gravest abuses exist in direct opposition to Treaty obligations. As regards Armenia I admit extreme difficulty; the population is exceedingly mixed, and I do not think that in any of the districts the Armenians are a majority of the population. In Van, no doubt, the population ought to be protected, but we cannot protect all the world. It is better to say that the Turks having failed to fulfil their obligations, we are, on our part, relieved from the duties we conditionally undertook. There is one other matter I would mention. The practice has been a good deal followed of trying to cure these evils by blistering. It seems to me that in regard to Armenia and Khurdistan there has been an idea that blistering is the right course to pursue, and that the blister has been applied in the appointment of Mr. Clifford Lloyd, a gentleman who has succeeded in stirring up ill-feeling wherever he has been. On the consular part of the Vote I propose to move a reduction, on the specific ground that there has been an abuse of the system of retirement and pension on medical certificate. I took occasion to ask if Mr. Clifford Lloyd's appointment was in order to promote conciliation and peace, and I was not surprised that the answer was "No." Mr. Clifford Lloyd is a firebrand. He retired from service in Ireland upon a medical certificate, and was sent to another part of the world. He again retired on a medical certificate, and we thought we had heard the last of him as a public servant. But where things are getting into a heated state, where strife is predominant, and there is mischief to be done, Mr. Clifford Lloyd reappears again, and I hope that some explanation of the appointment will be forthcoming.

*(8.10.) MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E): The denunciation of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, and of its possible results, by the hon. Member for

Northampton, and others, seem to me to be rather in the nature of an anachronism. It is rather like slaying the slain. Whatever faults I have to find with the Ministry I do consider them a sane Ministry, and whatever suggestions are offered them I do not suppose they will consider the Anglo Turkish Convention to be anything but what it was happily described to be some years ago, "An insane Convention that no practical body of men would carry into effect." That being so, I venture to say that suggestions that sometimes come from this side, from those, who, like myself, are interested in the fate of the Christian populations in the Turkish dominions, do not contemplate the carrying of British arms into the remote fastnesses of Armenia. We maintain that these discussions are of real value and of vital importance to the immediate future of these oppressed and unfortunate populations. They show that we are moved by the reports of their sufferings, which from time to time reach us, though any amount of dust is attempted to be thrown in our eyes by the Turkish Government and officials. I am glad to say that the conduct of Sir William White throughout the whole of the Moussa Bey affair deserves the warmest commendation. I have the more satisfaction in saying this because last year I ventured to pass certain strictures upon his conduct, which now I say is absolutely free from censure. These discussions are of real value, for they draw attention to the fact that these unfortunate people have friends in England who will ventilate their grievances, and set before the public opinion of Europe the story of their sufferings. The hon. Member for the Scotland division has referred to the important memorandum of Consul Chermside. Now, he is an official who is rather inclined to apologise for Turkish administration, rather inclined to receive Reports which favour their side of the question, and his contributions to the Blue Book are certainly less favourable to the Armenian population than are the Reports of Consul Devey, who is nearer the scene of the outrages. I only mention this to show the importance of Consul Chermside's admissions. If he does not quite apologise for Turkish administration he endeavours to represent that things are not quite so bad as they have been. He admits the existence of outrages, but he says they are less frequent, and some of the statements, especially in reference to the ill-treatment of women, are grossly exaggerated. But, then, in another part of his Memorandum we find confirmation of the statement of the attacks to which the Christian population are subjected from the Kurdish tribes, and an admission that the area of these outrages has been widened. Consul Chermside says the Turkish Government have endeavoured to improve the Courts of Justice, and are endeavouring, he says, to carry out their obligations under the Treaty of Berlin by this means, but they have not the best material for carrying this out, and so their object is defeated. Then he goes on to say that the policy of the Government has been to develop Moslem self-reliance, and, side by side with this passage, he says the difference in status between Moslem and Christian populations is very marked. Is not this owing to the policy of developing Moslem self-reliance? Practically this and other passages in the Memorandum support the contention put forward by some of the friends of the Armenians that the policy of Turkish administration is to lower the position of the Christians, step by step, so leaving them more open to the outrages to which they have been subjected. I do not know whether any reference has yet been made to a very important memorial addressed by the Armenian Ecclesiastics and the Patriarch to the Turkish Government, which is important as showing the tendency of the Turkish policy in regard to the suppression of the rights of the Armenians. In this memorial from the priesthood complaint is made of the withdrawal from their Ecclesiastical Courts of Jurisdiction in certain classes of cases, and of the withdrawal of the right to publish their own historical, educational, and religious books, in violation of the direct engagement to protect the rights of the Christian population. This is a matter of the greatest possible importance, and I should like to hear if Her Majesty's Government have directed that any representation should be made to the Porte, through Sir William White, on the withdrawal of these rights. Obviously, these rights are of the greatest importance, dealing, as they do, with questions of marriage and inheritance in a community situated among a polygamous race, and they are rights that have again and again been granted by Sultans of Turkey. These things are dangerously indicative of the real Turkish policy towards the Christian population, to degrade the Christians and encourage the Moslem population to ignore Christian rights. Anyone who reads the facts contained in the Blue Book will see that, in substance, the charges brought forward last year are more than substantiated. These discussions point to the fact that we are face to face with a dangerous policy of repression and misrepresentation and withdrawal of Christian rights, and I think the British Government have an ample right to declare that no means shall be left untried for putting legitimate diplomatic pressure upon the Porte to end this state of things. We have ample proof in the past that the desire of the Armenians is not to amalgamate themselves with Russia, but rather that they shall be a buffer between our interests and Russian aggrandisement. This tendency among other Christian populations was neglected in the past, until, driven to extremity, they had no refuge but in the arms of Russia. Before we come to that critical stage, which is fast approaching, I hope Her Majesty's Government will make a strong effort to obtain concerted diplomatic action among the Powers, not military, but diplomatic action, to represent to the Porte, and press upon it the absolute necessity of conceding reforms, and a modified form of autonomous government for Armenia, to end those troubles it is not only the right but the duty of England to bring forward.

*(8.20.) SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I share a great many of the sentiments which have been given expression to by hon. Gentlemen with reference to the hardships suffered by some of the Christian population in Turkey, especially in the instances referred to, and regret that at this time of day such outrages should not have been dealt with in a firmer manner. It does not seem that we should be unduly sentimental to feel deep regret, if not something stronger,

that when at last a man who has been notorious for his crimes and his cruelties had been brought to trial before the eyes of Europe, his trial should have been conducted in a way so little calculated to inspire confidence in the course of justice, and to show so little regard for the public opinion of the world, which must, undoubtedly, condemn such evasions of justice. These are feelings we all must share, and I am glad that hon. Members have recognised in the Papers lately presented that, in regard to the trial of Moussa Bey, Her Majesty's Ambassador has fitly represented the opinion of this country. Her Majesty's Government have not been slow to press on the Porte that it is its duty and interest to bring this man to a just and fair trial. Hon. Members who have expressed approval of Sir William White's conduct have only confirmed that high praise which was accorded to him by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian on the first night of the Session. Our representative has not been lacking in anything that could bring the opinion and the influence of this country to bear on the position of the subject races, or in anything that could induce the Government of the country to deal adequately with gross offences when they were brought to its knowledge. Hon. Members, however, must recognise that there is a point at which advice and solicitation from a foreigner might fail in their purpose. If the representatives of other Powers were not as energetic in representing the public opinion of Europe in such a matter, and Her Majesty's Ambassador, on the other hand, was constantly knocking at the doors of the Porte, and tendering advice as to the affairs of the country, I think it might rather tend to diminish British influence than secure the objects we have at heart. The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor) has referred to the treaty in which the Ottoman Government entered into engagements to improve the government of the provinces and the condition of the Christian population, and although a special Convention was entered into for the purpose of devising such measures, in concert with ourselves, for the better government of the Asiatic population, that Convention has practically been non-effective. It has never been found possible to secure that concert between Her Majesty's Government and the Ottoman Government with regard to specific measures. Undoubtedly Her Majesty's Government, not alone the present Government, but they have acted in common with their predecessors, have urged upon the Ottoman Government, in its own interests, and in order that the public opinion of this country might not be alienated from a country which has been our ally, that it should not disregard all its promises by a continual failure to administer good government in those provinces. It is not, of course, possible for Her Majesty's Government to exercise material and substantial power in the Ottoman dominions. We can only bring to notice what is the sentiment of the people of this country, and point out how largely the policy of the Government is always influenced by public opinion here; and that if the Ottoman Government is deaf to such counsels, and so weak as to fail to carry out those reforms which seem to Her Majesty's Government to be urgently called for, then such a policy will certainly not be to its advantage, and must tend to the alienation of the feeling in this country. The Government of the Sultan, however, have very great difficulties to deal with. In particular provinces a fertile source of danger is the contending races and tribes, who are extremely difficult to control. Last year, when these matters were under discussion, I pointed out that the Porte had given proofs of a desire for the amelioration of the condition of the Christian provinces by the appointment of an official whose antecedents gave promise of good government, and I am very glad to be able to tell the Committee that very lately a despatch was received from Constantinople which contains a report from Bitlis, describing the good effect produced on the government of that province since Réouf Pacha assumed direction of affairs. This despatch will form part of the next Blue Book to be laid before the House. So far as Armenia is concerned, we know that the Governor General of the province is taking measures to restore order and repress disturbances. From the Blue Book, to which reference has been made, it will be recognised that the Government have encouraged Her Majesty's officers to send full Reports of the state of affairs in that part of the world. Colonel Chermside's account is in some respects encouraging. I had the advantage of a good deal of conversation with him recently, and he assured me that, much as there is to regret and much as there is to be done for the good government of these provinces, there has been substantial improvement in the condition of the people there. I should do wrong if I were to promise the Committee that the Government can do much, but I can say with confidence that whatever is in the power of Her Majesty's Government to do for the amelioration of the condition of the people, and the removal of the grievances they endure, it will be the duty and interest of the Government to carry out in the cause of humanity and the peace of the world. (8.33.)

(9.5.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. A. O'CONNOR: The answer just given by the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs is not so satisfactory as the Committee would desire. No doubt the Committee will appreciate the sympathetic tone of the hon. Baronet's remarks, but beyond this it will be impossible for them to go. The right hon. Baronet appeared to think that whatever might be the condition of the Christian subjects in Turkey it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to move hand or foot in the matter for any practical purpose. If that is the conclusion to which the right hon. Gentleman has really come I venture to think he must have very strange ideas of our treaty obligations, because the terms of the Treaty of Berlin are so express and emphatic that those who are party to them must have intended to have laid down clear and specific obligations. It was there arranged that immediately, and without any delay, the Porte should undertake certain ameliorations in the condition of the inhabitants of Armenia, and the introduction of certain reforms. That was altogether apart from the question of the protection of the Christian inhabitants from the attacks and outrages of the Circassians and the Kurds. With regard to the administrative reforms then promised, an undertaking was entered into by the Porte that, from time to time, Reports should be made to the other Signatory Powers of the reformatory steps that were taken. I should like to hear from the right hon. Gentleman what Reports have been received in carrying out this undertaking. I think we shall find they have amounted practically to nothing. If, however, any Reports have been received, I would ask what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to impress upon the Porte the obligations under which it rests in consequence of the words which were added at the express wish of Lord Salisbury. The right hon. Gentleman has given us no information on this point. His remarks are almost entirely confined to the very notorious and extreme cases of crime and atrocity committed by one particular individual, but the individual atrocities are only a small portion of the case. At the time of the Berlin Conference, the Armenians who then addressed Lord Beaconsfield stated emphatically that however great the misconduct of the Kurds and Circassians might have been that of the Turks was still worse and more hateful, and it was in regard to these evils that the undertaking I have referred to was entered into by the Porte. The right hon. Gentleman has informed us that the condition of the country is better than it used to be, and he has referred us to the Report of Colonel Chermside. I also have before me the Report of Colonel Chermside. He says—

> "The state of affairs which evokes so much sympathy for the lot of Turkish Armenians in Kurdistan always exists."

Then again—

> "The virtual inequality of Christian and Moslem, the want of efficient protection to the former, and of vindication of violence towards him exists as before; nor need I trouble your Excellency with a repetition of the many well-known shortcomings of Turkish administration."

Further on he says—

> "The contributions demanded by the Aghas are in no wise recognised by the Government, but the latter is, of course, perfectly aware of their existence."

It should be known that those exactions here referred to are at least three times

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the amount that can properly be imposed by law. On page 19 of his Report, Colonel Chermside says—

> "Former Reports of Major Clayton and Colonel Everett describe the very abject condition of the inhabitants of many Christian hamlets and villages; this still exists."

Further on he says—

> "The great scourge of the settled population of the mountainous districts of Kurdistan, between Van and the Tigris, and South of the Eastern Euphrates, is the 'Kocher' or nomad Kurdish population. Since the removal of the Begs, the Kochers have invaded districts formerly free from them. It is freely asserted that since the Berlin Treaty, Turkey has done nothing to improve matters in her Asiatic provinces. The limiting of the power of the Executive, the introduction of the new system of Tribunals of Justice were very comprehensive and expensive measures. Their failure for want of good instruments for execution, and for other reasons, is notorious and fully dealt with in numerous Consular Reports. What is, perhaps, the crux of the question as regards the Armenians, is that efficient protection is not extended to individuals, neither are their rights vindicated, nor their equality anything but a name."

Then again—

> "The fostering of the exclusive spirit of Islam, combined with the great jealousy of Moslems at the material prosperity of such a large number of their Christian fellow subjects have stimulated that bitter feeling against Christians which so strongly pervades the Moslems throughout the Empire, more noticeably so, indeed, in other districts than Kurdistan. It is often asserted that, owing to the toleration of Turkey as regards language, religions, &c., the Armenians are by no means disaffected, and only anxious for security, tranquility, and the real recognition of their rights as citizens. This view is rather that of those educated Armenians, dwellers in towns, who are aware of the advantages which they enjoy in Turkey. As education develops, the Armenians who look to the Western nations as their model, become more and more discontented with the Oriental civilisation in which they find themselves. The uneducated classes are merely loyal as far as influenced by the educated. The old race and religious antipathy to Kurd and Moslem exists. Their sympathies are with any Christian Power as against the Turk. The educated from their habits of intrigue and mutual jealouses are as incompetent as ever to combine, and the poorer classes have no power, being rarely armed and being surrounded by a majority of the hostile and dominant religion. The Turks, however, are quite correct, in my opinion, in considering them disaffected. The formation a few years since of Secret Societies and Committees near Erzeroum, and in other districts, the proposals and attempts to procure arms, the occurrences of recent years at and near Van, all indicate the true sentiments of disaffection. It would indeed be strange were it otherwise."

On page 23 Colonel Chermside says—

> "I have, however, the satisfaction to inform you that, through the strong and honest administration of Haji Hassan Bey, almost all the principal bad characters in the Diarbekir Vilayet have lately been arrested, and the prisons of Mardin and Diarbekir are full now. It is hoped that the province may be hereafter tranquilised, provided they receive their deserved punishment, and that depends upon the uprightness of the Criminal Courts, which the experience of past years does not lead us to hope for. It may, perhaps, be within the truth to state that the feelings of Mahommedans in general are not so friendly towards Armenians as some years ago, and they sometimes evince their dislike, but it is impossible to subdue such feelings by any but moral means."

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: If the hon. Member looks at the last paragraph of Colonel Chermside's Report he will see the grounds for the observations I have made.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I am afraid I have somewhat mutilated my own copy, having taken out those parts which I thought would be material, and not having with me that part of the Report which the right hon. Gentleman refers to, but, having read the Report with great care, I have not been able to arrive at the conclusions which appear to be so satisfactory to the right hon. Baronet. The question has been raised as to the comparative populations of the districts of Armenia, and an hon. Baronet speaking from above the Gangway seemed to doubt whether the Armenians were in a majority in any part. The fact is that they are in a majority in the districts of the Van, Mush, Bitlis, and Erzeroum, where the total figures amount to 1,330,000 Armenians. The statistics are furnished by the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, and I offer them for what they are worth. I know of no better authority, and I think the Turkish Government could scarcely be better informed. In the central portion of major or greater Armenia, the Armenians are in overwhelming majority, yet I find they are subject to every kind of individual atrocity at the hands of the Kurds, and they look in vain for protection at the hands of the Government. This country has undertaken treaty obligations, and it is of no avail for the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Cyprus Convention cannot be carried out. There is something anterior to, and more important than, the Cyprus Convention, and that is the Treaty of Berlin. If Her Majesty's Government cannot approach the Sultan alone, is there any chance of combined action on the part of the Signatory Powers? From a diplomatic point of view, I should have thought that would have been more acceptable to Her Majesty's Government, because such a step could be taken without arousing the jealousy that would be awakened by isolated action. Has any attempt been made to secure unity of pressure at the hands of the Signatories to carry out these obligations with regard to the Christian populations?

*(9.17.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I hoped I had satisfied the Committee and hon. Gentlemen who initiated this discussion. I am sorry that the hon. Member has not read the full text of the Report, or he would at once perceive the grounds on which I made the statement with respect to Colonel Chermside. In his Report, as well as in his conversation, he stated that there was a decided improvement, notwithstanding the many faults that remained. Colonel Chermside states, as the hon. Member will see on referring to the Blue Book, that progress has been made which, on the whole, is not discreditable. The hon. Member asks whether the Government intend to propose a Congress to consider how far the promises made at Berlin can be carried out.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Joint pressure.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No such action has been proposed by Her Majesty's present Government, or by any preceding Government. It is evident that the Powers would act with very various intentions, and that the power which took the initiative would not increase its influence at the Porte.

(9.20.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us what are the functions of Mr. Clifford Lloyd and of Colonel Chermside?

*SIR. J. FERGUSSON: Colonel Chermside has been appointed military *attaché* to the Embassy at Constantinople, and Mr. Clifford Lloyd has been appointed in his place Consul at Erzeroum. There is every confidence that he will satisfactorily discharge the duties.

(9.21.) MR. LEGH: These appointments are of a character which require special training, and they should only be bestowed on persons who are qualified by having received that training, and should not be made in a casual way, and for reasons that do not apply to the particular position. On grounds of general fitness, I cannot say that this is altogether a justifiable appointment.

*(9.23.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: Colonel Chermside and Mr. Clifford Lloyd appeared to the Secretary of State to be the fittest for the work that is to be done. In such places very special qualifications are required, and I must say, from the manner in which Colonel Chermside has performed his duties, that his appointment is fully justified.

(9.24.) MR. W. REDMOND: I think it would be satisfactory to Members on this Bench if the hon. Gentleman would give us a little more information with regard to the appointment of Mr. Clifford Lloyd to this extremely important position. I think there is a great deal of force in what has fallen from hon. Gentlemen opposite with regard to the advisability of the exercise of the greatest possible care and caution in appointments of this kind. I do not know exactly what the duties of Mr. Clifford Lloyd may be in the position which he occupies; but from our knowledge of his career in Ireland it is extremely probable that the people placed under his influence are suffering very greatly indeed. I would like to know exactly how much Mr. Clifford Lloyd is paid, and how it was he came to be selected when there are many men in this country so much better qualified for the position. I meant also to call attention to the practice of putting down different salaries to one official, and I would suggest that the total sum he receives should be put next his name, in order hon. Members may not be misled, and may know what amount he really receives, and for what he receives it. At the Spanish Embassy I find a clerk receives £300 a year, and a further salary of £250 a year as Consul in Madrid. I do not complain of the amount this gentleman receives, but I think it is extremely likely to mislead

hon. Members that the total amount he receives is not shown against his name. There are various examples of this practice. I should like to ask some questions with regard to the item of "Special Missions." There is a "Special Service" in Corea, £1,600; Special Service on the West Coast of Africa, £1,200; "Missions and Services, 1890-91, £11,450; 1889-90, £10,250." It is most undesirable that hon. Members should be asked to vote these sums of money without being told what they are going to be used for. Unforeseen Missions and Services £11,450! I cannot for a moment conceive that it would be likely that if any mission or service was shown to be necessary, the money would not be willingly and readily voted by the House; but it is hardly treating the Members of the House with confidence or courtesy to ask them to vote large sums of money without telling them what the money is for. I have not the least idea what the special service on the West Coast of Africa is. If an expedition is to be sent to the West Coast of Africa tell us so, and I have no doubt the Committee will be willing to vote any reasonable amount of money. But I protest in the strongest possible manner against this sort of repetition of the Secret Service Grant. Now, having heard the speech of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor), I cannot but regard the action of the Government, in respect to Armenia, as most unsatisfactory. I consider the Government is bound to take every step to put an end to the atrocities which are from time to time committed on the Armenian people. There was a time when it might very well do for the Government to say that the rumours as to atrocities were not well-founded, but I do not think the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will have the hardihood to get up now and say there is not good foundation for what is complained of in regard to Armenia. I am sorry to say that, in my opinion, there is not the same disposition on the part of the Government to denounce atrocities committed under the sanction and in the name of the Government of Turkey that there is to denounce cruelties and atrocities committed with the sanction of the Russian

Government. The right hon. Gentleman might give us a more satisfactory answer than refer us to the pages of the Report he has quoted. We know that since that Report was made there have been outrages committed, and that there have been appeals made to the people of this country on behalf of the Armenians. All we ask for is an assurance that Her Majesty's Government are determined to make representations to the Government of the Sultan, to let him know that his friendly relations with this country cannot continue if he persists in sanctioning the perpetration of outrages and atrocities which are simply terrifying to the mind of the average Englishman.

*(9.36.) MR. CHANNING: I do not rise to continue the discussion on the Armenian question, but simply to express my regret that the right hon. Gentleman was not in a position to state his authority for his statement with reference to Raouf Pasha. Last year I read a statement with regard to Raouf Pasha, which was taken from the French *Le Temps*, which is supposed to have the means of obtaining exceptionally good information. The statement was to the effect that Raouf Pasha, when in power at Beyrout, was an entire failure; that there were constant quarrels and murders between the Christians and the Mohammedans, and that it was incumbent on the Porte to remove him. That was the reason why he went to Armenia

(9.37.) MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Last year I called the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the condition of the Consular Courts in Siam, and he promised then that the Minister would, on his arrival, take the matter into consideration. I should like to know what has been done.

*(9.38.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: The Consular Court at Bangkok has been brought under the Supreme Court at Singapore, by which any miscarriage of justice will be rectified. But I am not aware that anything has taken place to show that the Consular Court at Bangkok is not an efficient Court. The hon. Member for Fermanagh has expressed dissatisfaction with what I have said in reply to the hon. Member for the Scotland Division, and others, as to Armenia. I rather despair of being able to satisfy the hon. Member upon the Armenian question, as I am not prepared to go further than I have already gone in the matter. Her Majesty's Government have done all that they could judiciously do; and though we regret that much has been left undone by Turkey, yet some progress has been made. With regard to the double office held by the clerk at the Madrid Embassy, it is felt that the gentleman is able to fill the two offices. The salary he receives is certainly not excessive. It is difficult to put down an account of "unforeseen Missions" which will take place next year, and it would be inconvenient to produce a special estimate to the House at various periods of the Session. A sum of £600 will be taken as extra expenses for the Danube Commission, and a sum will be taken for special Consular Service in China in connection with the opening of the ports on the Yenisi River, and in connection with Corea, as well as an item in connection with telegraphs. It is difficult to estimate exactly what will be required for unforeseen Missions, but the sum of £15,000 is what has been thought sufficient in previous years.

(9.47.) MR. W. REDMOND: What I complain of is that no account is given of the £11,450. The right hon. Gentleman says that if it is not used it will be returned to the Exchequer. Well, I want to know when the practice first came into existence of asking Parliament to vote a considerable sum of money when there is no present necessity for it merely on the supposition that something may arise to render it necessary. If the right hon. Gentleman thinks any of us can be persuaded that if there is no necessity for the expenditure of this money it will be returned to the Exchequer, he is of a very imaginative turn of mind indeed. I am of opinion that a Vote of this kind is an invitation to men in Africa and different parts of the world to spend the money. They will say, "If this money is not spent it will be returned to the Treasury; why should we not have a finger in the pie? It is quite as good for us to see the necessity of having it spent as to have it returned to the Treasury." I utterly and completely object to vote and decline to vote money on the understanding that if it is not used it can be returned to the Treasury. I see that last year £1,200 was put down for services on the West Coast of Africa. This year that item is omitted, for purposes of economy, I suppose; but, strangely enough, exactly that amount is added to the item for unforeseen Missions. Last year the amount for these Missions was £10,250, and this year it is £11,450. I would ask how long has the practice of taking this Vote been in existence, and does the right hon. Gentleman think it desirable to ask for this money? Why does he fix on £11,450? Africa is an immense place, and if Missions there are expected millions of money might be spent on them. Why does not the right hon. Gentleman ask for £50,000, or even £100,000? We have been told about complications likely to arise between Germany and this country, or Portugal and this country, in regard to these immense tracts of country known as "spheres of influence." Well, with the rumours afloat as to German Colonial policy and our quarrels in Portugal, there is no doubt we may be embroiled in serious difficulties, and in such event I am afraid that this £11,450 might not be enough for the extra Missions and Services this country might be called on to undertake. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he approves of this system, how much money was spent in this way last year, and whether he can give us any sort of dark hint as to what the unforeseen Missions and Services in Africa may be this year? It would be more than natural if hon. Members did not seek an explanation of these matters.

*(9.55.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am afraid I cannot satisfy the hon. Gentleman. There has been a Mission to the West Coast of Africa, a Conference at Brussels, a Mission to Rome, and two special Missions to Berlin. These are all the Missions which I can remember just now. As the hon. Member is aware, the sum of £15,000 has been voted for unforeseen Missions for the past four years, that amount being found to be sufficient to meet probable requirements. In addition to that amount, in 1885 we had

to ask for £12,500, in 1886-7 we spent £7,000, and in 1888 only £6,500. Last year we were within the Estimate, but we cannot hope that that will always be the case. The Committee knows the wide area over which the British Empire extends, and, therefore, over which the necessity for these special Missions extends. As in the Civil Service at home, there is a Vote for "Contingencies," so in the Foreign Service we have to ask for this sum for unforeseen Missions.

(9.57.) MR. W. REDMOND: Can the right hon. Gentleman give an instance of money being returned to the Treasury when voted for unforeseen Missions? I must say I feel inclined to congratulate myself on having got a good deal of satisfactory information from the right hon. Gentleman as to how the money was spent last year. He tells us they were arranging territorial lines with the French Government and that there was a Mission to Berlin and one to Rome. What an amount of time would be saved if the Government had the common sense to put the Missions on which the money was spent one year on the Votes of the year following! Can the right hon. Gentleman give us an instance of money being returned to the Treasury?

*(9.59.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: In the year 1887-8 £15,000 was voted and £6,500 spent. The surplus would be handed over to the Treasury or devoted to other purposes. It is, of course, impossible to say at the commencement of a year what the unforeseen contingencies for that year will be.

(10.0.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: This Vote must be strenuously resisted, seeing that it enables Her Majesty's Government to carry out such objectionable Missions as that to Rome last year without giving the House an opportunity of discussing them. There is nothing that involves the feelings of the people of this country more than a question of this kind, and I maintain that when the Government want to spend money in this way we should have Supplementary Estimates asked for. And now, to go alphabetically down the items of this Vote, I should like to say a word with regard to Egypt. I have made a great many speeches on the subject of Egypt, and the reason I have done so is because Her Majesty's

Government are still occupying that country. I should like to know what policy Her Majesty's Government intend to pursue in the matter of this occupation. The House has been told over and over again that our occupation of Egypt is to be only a temporary one, but the longer we stay there the less the signs are of our coming away. It would seem at present as if we are to stop there permanently; and if the Government mean that, I think they should tell us so honestly. Her Majesty's Government will tell us that they must remain in Egypt until the country is fit to govern itself; but do they want it to be able to govern itself? Are they taking the necessary steps to render such a thing possible? They sent a very distinguished man—Lord Dufferin—to Egypt a short time ago to render the place capable of governing itself, and he laid down a certain line of policy with that object in view; but his plans have never been carried out. Lord Dufferin's Mission was a farce and a sham, as no attempt has ever been made to follow its conclusions. The financial administration of Egypt appears to be successful from the bondholders' point of view, but that success has only been secured at the expense of increasing the taxation of the country. There has not been the slightest real attempt made to make Egypt a self governing country, while the internal administration has been starved, the provision for education especially having been kept down to the lowest possible point. We have doubled the value of the bonds in Egypt no doubt, and the French and English bondholders have reason to praise us. But, again I ask, is that an advantage? We are often told that as long as we hold Egypt it will be an embarrassment to us in time of peace and an infinitely greater embarrassment in time of war. It involves jealousy and want of friendship on the part of the French, and what I should like to do is to patch up a decent Native Government, get together a good Native Army, and leave Egypt to take care of itself. I do not think the Prime Minister is right in saying that Orientals are not capable of carrying on a Constitutional Government. You have failed in Egypt because you have not tried, and in Turkey because the Turks were not willing. But great aptitude for Constitutional government has been shown. I should like to ask what is the present state of the negotiations as regards the loans, whether the French have considered the question of conversion more favourably, and whether Her Majesty's Government have agreed to the request of the French to consent to a new loan? I should also like the right hon. Gentleman to give us some explanation of the state of things in the country about Suakin, and to say what is the policy of the Government with regard to Suakin.

(10.12.) MR. W. REDMOND: I should like to ask whether Her Majesty's Government have considered the advisableness of commuting, to some extent, the sentence passed on Arabi Pasha? It has been represented to me, I believe with justice, that he is suffering very severely indeed from the climate of Ceylon. The Government, when I brought the subject forward some time ago, did not hold out any hope that the sentence would be remitted. I think that at this time of day they might with great propriety consider the advisableness of remitting the sentence, or, at all events, of allowing him to be consulted as to whether he would like to go to some other part of the world.

(10.13) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): There are three or four Votes other than those to which the attention of the Government has been directed and of which I think some notice ought to be taken. Over and over again we hear of the large salaries granted to German Princes who are brought over to obtain positions which they cannot possibly get at home. In these Votes we find large sums being paid to Ambassadors and Chargés d'Affaires in petty little States in Germany. The miserable little German Principality of Coburg has a Chargé d'Affaires who gets £500 a year and £200 a year besides for the premises he occupies. In Darmstadt, another impotent, obscure, and very small Principality, you have a Chargé d'Affaires who gets a salary of £1,050 besides £200 for rent. Compare these with the Kingdom of Saxony—a larger portion of the German Empire—and you find that the Secretary of Legation gets £750 a year with the sum of £200 for his rent. I think we ought to have some explanation of this matter. This seems to be a means of providing for the scions of noble houses something to do in places where nothing can be done. I think, Sir, that while there is such trouble at home it is a great and crying injustice to grant these large sums of money in the hole-and corner way in which again and again it is sought to be done in the House of Commons. This Vote is put down for the first evening of the Session in the hope that Members would not attend. That is not the way in which the business of the House of Commons should be conducted, and I sincerely hope we shall have some explanation of the items I have referred to. There are so many blots in this Vote that it would take a very long time were we to go into them all. I pity Her Majesty's Government and the unfortunate Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, who has to assume all the responsibility with respect to these matters, knowing the miserable deficiencies and defects that are apparent in the Vote. I will, however, content myself with asking for an explanation of one other item. The British Medical Officer of Health at Constantinople gets £400 a year, and there is a note in the Estimates stating that that is merely an allowance made to the physician of the Embassy. I wish to know whether that position is open to competition, or is it in the gift of Members of the Government? To my mind, all these posts should be thrown open to competition, so that young men of merit may be able to reach the positions to which they are entitled by their worth.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I omitted to move the reduction of the Vote, and I wish to do so now.

The CHAIRMAN: Several subsequent questions have been addressed to the right hon. Gentleman, and he will be unable to answer them if the hon. Member moves the reduction of a specific item now.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I hope the hon. Member will not think it necessary to move the reduction. It is a fact that the burden of taxation in Egypt has been reduced and that the revenue has increased from natural causes. The doubt which the hon. Member has expressed on the subject is the first suggestion I have heard for many weeks contrary to the general impression that there are indications of greatly increased prosperity among the people of Egypt. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), who recently returned from Egypt, has spoken of the indications of prosperity that he noticed, and surely his evidence may be accepted as that of a competent and impartial witness. The best proofs are the increased comfort of the people, the increase of revenue from diminished taxes, and the improvement in the system of public works, which brings more land into cultivation and enables the people to bear either an abnormally high Nile or an abnormally low Nile without serious damage. In spite of the heavy expenditure last year, there is a surplus of revenue over expenditure. It is much to be regretted that the conversion proposal has not been carried out, because it would have lightened the burdens of the people very considerably; but I hope arrangements will be come to by negotiation whereby the end will be attained. As to the question of the hon. Member for Cork (Dr. Tanner), these discussions may be indefinitely prolonged if Members who have not been present early in the evening come in and ask questions that have been already answered.

Dr. TANNER: Will the right hon. Gentleman pardon me for a moment? I heard only last night that this Vote was coming on to-day, and I travelled post-haste from Cork in consequence.

*(10.29.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: Well, I have already stated that the Government, pursuant to a pledge to reduce the small Missions in Germany, have not filled up the post in Stuttgardt, and I think other positions when they become vacant will not be filled up. The doctor in Constantinople is undoubtedly not appointed by open competition. The medical officers are generally appointed in consultation with the Ambassador under whom they have to serve, and I think the Public Service does not suffer by the fact that these appointments are not put up to public competition.

(10.30.) Dr. TANNER: I may explain that when I called attention to the medical member of the Legation I knew nothing whatever of the gentleman in question. I thought it would be for the interest of the Service to apply the principle which has elsewhere been much followed, of submitting the claims of members of the medical profession to examination rather than leaving them to interest.

*(10.31.) **Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID** (St. Pancras, S.): The hon. Gentleman near me (Sir G. Campbell) seems to have most strange information. The information I have received, and some of it from Egyptian sources, leaves no doubt that the condition of Egypt has improved immensely in the last few years; the income has increased by the natural increase of wealth and of population, and taxation has been remitted. If the French would agree upon the conversion which is proposed by Her Majesty's Government, still further benefits would accrue to the population of Egypt. I think that under these circumstances it is a little disappointing to find the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy making such statements as those we have just listened to.

(10.32.) **Sir G. CAMPBELL**: I purposely avoided going into particulars. The habits and the condition of the people of Egypt are not to be appreciated by figures. I have formed my opinion upon careful study and personal observation, but I knew when I expressed that opinion that the only result would be expressions of opinion from this side or that. As regards the financial question, having spent a winter in Egypt lately, and having studied the question carefully from means of information kindly afforded me, I maintain most deliberately that the revenue has been increased, not by a natural rise, but by the imposition of increased taxation, although I admit that in some cases taxation has been remitted. Remissions have been on the smallest scale, while taxation has been imposed in direct contravention of the recommendations of the highest authorities. Lord Dufferin and Lord Northbrook recommended that the Land Tax should be remitted, and it was not remitted, and a Salt Tax and other taxes have been imposed. But I do not wish to detain the Committee with statistics. I maintain, however, that my opinion, arrived at after careful study of facts, cannot be contradicted by any expert. Additional burdens have been imposed, though I admit the result has proved—the revenue being obtained—that the people have been able for the time to bear these burdens. There was another point I referred to—the state of affairs near Suakin, but I will revert to that on the Consular Vote.

(10.35.) **Mr. WADDY** (Lincolnshire, Brigg): Until I heard the observations of the hon. Baronet the Member for South St. Pancras (Sir Julian Goldsmid), I was not disposed to quarrel with this item, but he makes clear a case against it; for if his information is correct—and I have no reason to doubt it—and we have been doing so much good to Egypt, then the inference is that that country should bear this expense, and we are not required to extend our philanthropy and benevolence further, but this £5,000 should be struck out of the Estimate. It is among the largest items of its kind, coming third after France and Germany. When we look at Sub-note B we are told that there is a further allowance of £1,000, so that the British taxpayer is called on to pay £6,000 on this account, a claim which is no longer justified. Members have wandered up and down these items, so that I scarcely know exactly what point we have reached; but there is an item in the Turkish Vote, and I may take this as a cognate subject upon which I should like information. I wonder what sort of a thing is an archivist. What is he or it? Why does Turkey want one; and if the Turks want one, why is it that other people do not? Is it simply a means of giving money to some one not giving his name? Also more information is wanted as to the items for chaplains and physicians in some cases and not in others. There are matters also that require elucidation in relation to unforeseen Missions; but, for the present, confining myself to this Egyptian item, I ask why we should vote this £6,000 on behalf of a people who, it appears, are well able to take care of themselves?

(10.38.) **Mr. LABOUCHERE**: I do not contest the fact that the Egyptians are better off now than under the late Khedive; they may be better off without being well off. But our system is to enforce the payment of taxation, not to be spent in the country, but for the benefit of the owners of Egyptian bonds, who are practically all in Europe. A great deal too much is taken out of the country. It is not our business to look after the Egyptians or spend the money of the British taxpayer in order that they may be better off or well off. We went there many years ago under a specific pledge to Europe, and to France especially, that we did not go there to remain, but upon one excuse or another we have remained in absolute violation of our pledge. I have made continual complaints of this, and while the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was in power, I must have divided the House some 30 or 40 times on this question, so that in no sense is it a Party question. But I do really think we ought to declare when we intend to leave the country now that we are practically told that Egypt is prosperous. If that is so, then we have fulfilled our purpose in going into Egypt and ought to leave the country. We are in an utterly false position towards the other European Powers, and especially towards France, so long as we remain in Egypt. There can be no warm feeling between the Governments of England and France so long as we remain there in absolute violation of our pledges. Now the hon. Baronet (Sir Julian Goldsmid) said in effect Egypt is a flourishing garden, and everybody there is sharing in the wealth and riches. Well, but only this morning I received a document, and I daresay the hon. Baronet received one also, which somewhat conflicts with that view of things. It was a circular from the Consul at Alexandria, and he asks for money because, he says, there is so much poverty in Alexandria—such a vast number of poor people for whom no employment can be provided. This is certainly in conflict with the statement that Egypt is in a properous condition. Allusion has been made to the exiles from Egypt—Arabi and his friends in Ceylon. I have frequently received communications from them, and several of them are most anxious to leave Ceylon. They were turned out of Egypt, and there was some sort of pledge given at their trial that they should be treated as political exiles, but in some curious way they are detained as prisoners in Ceylon. They are not allowed to leave; they cannot leave, because the allowance they have from the Egyptian Government would cease if they left Ceylon. Now, I do not think we ought to convert one of our Colonies into a gaol for the Egyptian Government. When we talk of the Egyptian Government, practically in a matter of this kind it does not exist. We know that practically it is only for the British Government to say the word and these people would be allowed to return to Egypt. It may be asked, why should the Egyptian Government make an allowance to these persons? The answer is because the Egyptian Government confiscated all their property under a system which in England is not recognised. These men have wives and children, and it is monstrous, because these men, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian would say, "rightly struggled to be free," that they, with their wives and families, should have their property confiscated and be deprived of the means of living. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will state that Her Majesty's Government will use their best offices to alleviate the fate of these unfortunate men. I received a letter from one of them only a week or two ago, in which he says they are suffering greatly from the climate, that his health is being injured, and that he is most anxious to be allowed, if not to go back to Egypt, to reside in some part of the dominions of the Sultan or in Cyprus, or, at any rate, to leave Ceylon. Will the right hon. Gentleman say that the best endeavours of Her Majesty's Government will be used to induce the Egyptian Government to agree either that these men shall be allowed to come back to Egypt, and that their allowance shall be continued, or that they shall be allowed to proceed to any part of the Sultan's dominions?

(10.47.) COLONEL NOLAN: There is a not unimportant question I wish to ask, and that is, what is the exact position of an "Agent" in the Diplomatic Service? He is not an Ambassador or a Chargé d'Affaires—these are well-known terms. But does he rank as a member of the Diplomatic Corps or as a Consul? I see also that our Representative in Bulgaria is also styled an Agent. It is a question of some importance, and upon the definition the gravest complications might arise. Is the Agent an accredited member of the Diplomatic Corps, and entitled to all the privileges of such a position? We know that the French and German War was precipitated by a fancied slight offered to an Ambassador, which, if offered to a Consul, would not have provoked such resentment. It has been asserted also that the Abyssinian War arose out of King Theodore's want of appreciation of the distinction between the positions of a Consul and a Chargé d'Affaires. Also I wish to know if the military attachés are put down in the Military Votes, and, if so, why, in regard to Russia, the military attaché is included in the Diplomatic Vote?

*(10.50.) Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Certainly our Agent in Egypt is classed among our Diplomatic Representatives. It will be observed that he is so described also in Bulgaria and in Zanzibar. There are other cases, including that of Egypt, where our Representative is styled "Agent." Of course, he is also Consul General, and undoubtedly in Egypt it is a diplomatic position of high importance, and hardly second to any Mission in Europe. The position of Sir Evelyn Baring is not only extremely important, but he has made it a position highly creditable to himself. Sir E. Baring is head of the Consular Staff as well as our Diplomatic Agent, and he has agents at Cairo, Alexandria, Suakin, the Soumali Coast, and other places; in fact, he holds the reins of our policy in Egypt in his hands. I am somewhat surprised that the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Waddy) should have raised the question as to the archivist. Of course, he is the officer who keeps the records of the Mission, who supplies precedents, makes researches into history whenever such are required for reference, and it is a duty of great importance. The question of chaplains was dealt with at an earlier period of the evening, and I need not refer to it again. The hon. Member for Northampton is perfectly consistent in his views with respect to Egypt. He saw that whatever might be the increased prosperity of the country too much is taken out of it, and undoubtedly it is a matter of great hindrance to the progress of that country that about 40 or 42 per cent. of the public revenue should be devoted to the payment of bondholders, but if we consider that only four years ago the country was unable to pay any interest on the debt, and that within the last two years Egypt has been able to re-pay the coupons and to meet the current interest, and that the Government have more than a million in reserve and a surplus on the present year, then it is evident that in spite of the tremendous strain the resources of the country are increasing, and that the burden practically is becoming less and less every year. There is no use in discussing whether our stay in Egypt is an element of disturbance in our European relations. No doubt it is a troublesome duty, and it was accepted unwillingly on this side of the House as well as on the other; but it is a duty which is being fulfilled in a manner which has surpassed all possible expectations. As for the exiles, I fancy that it was a happy case for Arabi and the others, that the British Government stepped in to procure exile for them in exchange for the execution which would otherwise probably have been inflicted upon them. They fared better by their detention in Ceylon than some of their predecessors, who, being exiled, yet never reached their place of exile. It is not, in the view of the Egyptian Government, desirable that these men should return to Egypt at present. It is said that the Egyptian Government is practically the British Government, but the British Government interfere as little as possible with the Egyptian administration. It is highly to the credit of the Khedive and his Ministers that they have lent themselves to reform and have availed themselves of the advice of the British Government.

(10.58.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I must protest against the view of the right hon. Gentleman. He says it is extremely likely that these men will suffer perpetual exile.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: No.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Well, it has extended over 10 years, and still the British Government hold out no hope of its termination. The right hon. Gentleman thinks that these men are extremely fortunate, and that under a former

Government they would have been poisoned. According to the right hon. Gentleman, there are criminal conspirators in England and even in this House. Why not apply the same rule of mercy in Egypt as in this country? These men fought against a foreign enemy, and I regret exceedingly that Arabi was beaten in the battle. Arabi and his friends have been sent to Ceylon because they took one side in what was essentially an Egyptian question. The right hon. Gentleman says the Egyptian Government are not willing that they should return to Egypt, but does he mean to say the Egyptian Government would resist a view expressed by Her Majesty's Government that the exiles should be allowed to leave Ceylon and still retain their allowance? I do protest against turning an English colony into a perpetual political prison for men who have taken a certain side in Egyptian politics, and I think the right hon. Gentleman should undertake to use his best efforts to induce the Egyptian Government to grant the application of these exiles for permission to live elsewhere than in Ceylon. I think they should, if they removed, be allowed to retain their pensions. I ask now that an inquiry should be held as to whether these men wish to remain in Ceylon or whether they will give their parole not to return to Egypt if allowed to live elsewhere. I received a letter from one of them, the other day, stating that his health is endangered and that he is most anxious to be allowed to return to Egypt, or, at all events, to go into some part of the Sultan's dominions, still retaining his allowance.

*(11.3.) CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N.): I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £300, the salary of the chaplain under the head of "Denmark." I think we should have further explanations on this Vote.

(11.3.) THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! In consequence of the way in which the first reduction was moved it is not competent to the hon. Member to move to reduce the Vote by this particular item.

*(11.4.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I may, perhaps, explain that the place where this chaplain is stationed is the resort of a large British seafaring population. The salary is only £85 a year, but the chaplain also receives an equivalent to subscriptions from residents, so that the total payment is £200 a year.

*(11.5.) CAPTAIN VERNEY: That explanation does not touch the point I wish to impress on the Committee. Many of us largely represent Nonconformists, and our constituents want to know the reasons for making these appointments. I ask the question in no spirit of opposition, but I think the right hon. Gentleman will admit that there is an entire absence of fairness in the way in which chaplains are distributed. Some first-class Embassies have no chaplains at all. There may be reasons why Denmark should have a chaplain, but I think it more important that there should be a chaplain at Havre. Now, we have in these kingdoms two Established Churches—the Established Church of England and the Established Church of Scotland. A large number of our sailors are Presbyterians; yet we never hear of a Presbyterian minister being appointed. I submit that these foreign chaplaincies should be abolished altogether, for I am sure no reasonable explanation can be given of the manner in which these appointments are distributed.

(11.7.) MR. W. REDMOND: I did hope the right hon. Gentleman would have replied to the remarks of the hon. Member for Northampton, for he might, at any rate, have promised to make inquiry into the case of the Egyptian exiles in Ceylon, and have undertaken that doctors should investigate the complaint that their health is being injured by their enforced residence in the island. The right hon. Gentleman took great credit because these men were exiled instead of being killed, but if the climate is injurious to their health they will eventually be killed. I think the right hon. Gentleman was singularly unfortunate in the reasons he gave why we should be satisfied with the condition of Egyptian affairs. He told us the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had returned from Egypt satisfied with the condition of the country. If he has done so I cannot help at once jumping to the conclusion that something is radically wrong there. And it is not an unreasonable thing to do, for the right hon. Gentleman went to America, and there altogether upset every chance of arriving at a satisfactory arrangement of the Fishery dispute. He brought back with him totally erroneous ideas of American politics, and he was presented with an address of congratulation before it was discovered that his ideas were all wrong.

(11.10.) Mr. WADDY: I propose to move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000, in connection with the salary of the Agent for Egypt, and I do so for financial reasons. Looking down the list of salaries I see that £4,000 is the highest paid to an officer of this kind, and I think the sum paid to the agent for Egypt may reasonably be reduced from £5,000 to £4,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed' "That a sum, not exceeding £306,909' be 'granted for the said Service."—(*Mr Waddy.*)

*(11.13.) Sir J. FERGUSSON: I can assure the hon. Member I have not intentionally abstained from answering any question put to me. Other opportunities will arise for discussing Egyptian affairs. With regard to the position of Arabi and the other exiles in Ceylon, if the hon. Member for Northampton will give me the name of the person in Ceylon suffering in health it shall be inquired into. As to the Motion of the hon. Member for the Brigg division of Lincolnshire, I cannot agree to it, as, from the important duties of the Agent and the eminent services he renders, the salary of £5,000 is not too high.

(11.15.) Colonel NOLAN: I think the right hon. Gentleman has misconceived the intention of the hon. Member for Northampton. He has told us the Government have undertaken the responsibility of keeping Arabi Pasha and his colleagues in exile, but seeing that these men have been in exile so many years, surely the time has come when it is possible to accept their personal guarantee that they will not attempt to disturb the peace of Egypt.

(11.18.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 52; Noes 149.—(Div. List, No. 46.)

Original Question again proposed.

*(11.33.) Sir G. CAMPBELL: After Egypt comes the Equator, and after the Equator comes France, and the question that has arisen with that country in regard to the Newfoundland Fisheries. This is a very important subject, on which I think the Committee are entitled to some explanation. I do not wish to cast any imputation on Her Majesty's Government, nor do I suspect them of any desire to see them make bad blood with France; on the contrary, I believe Her Majesty's Government are inclined to do their best to settle this question in an equitable manner. My only doubt is as to whether Her Majesty's Government have sufficient firmness to settle this matter in the way in which it ought to be settled. The best temporary arrangement that could have been made was that which was arranged under the *modus vivendi;* but as soon as that arrangement was known, the people of Newfoundland denounced it, and threatened all sorts of terrible things if the *modus vivendi* were enforced, which might lead to serious difficulties with France. There can be no doubt that this has become a very burning question, and it is exceedingly desirable and necessary to ensure a good understanding between this country and France, that the matter should be permanently settled. I hope not only that Her Majesty's Government will insist on the *modus vivendi*, and enforce it for the time being, but that steps may be taken for putting an end to the dispute for all time. I would submit to Her Majesty's Government that this is pre-eminently a question for judicial arbitration, especially as it is one which might be the means of plunging this country into war, as the consequence of an outburst of feeling on the part of the people of the different countries whose interests are affected. If it were brought before something like a Court of Arbitration, by which all parties would be bound, the question might admit of an easy and satisfactory solution, and I want to know from Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to adopt such a course? No doubt the French and English Governments may have come to an arrangement satisfactory to themselves, but that is not enough. They have also to deal with the Newfoundland

colony, and not only to carry the colony with them, but to satisfy the different sections of the colony, among whom violent prejudices exist in regard to what are claimed as French rights. The great advantage of arbitration would be that even it would satisfy all parties, we would be able to say, we have had a judicial decision, and the question has been settled fairly and with due reference to the interests of all parties. I was very pleased to see it stated in the *Times* newspaper that the French minister had said the only way of settling this question was by arbitration. The right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs shakes his head; therefore I suppose that was a mistake; but at any rate we ought to hear from the Government whether they are prepared to accept the proposal to allow the matter to be settled by arbitration. We had a remarkable instance of the feeling which animated the Newfoundland people in regard to the bait question. The Legislature of Newfoundland insisted on passing a very unfriendly Act, by which the French fishermen were deprived of the facilities for buying bait. That bait question was one of the principal matters on which the late elections turned, and the result was that the promoters of the Bait Act were defeated, because the great majority of the poorer people of Newfoundland found the French very good customers, and were desirous of being enabled to sell bait to them. I have in my hand a letter in which the writer speaks of the dreadful things that will be done if the British Government does not uphold the rights of Newfoundland, but there are a great many people in Newfoundland who would rather have the French there. At any rate there are two sides to the question. I hope the Government will assure us that they are not only determined to enforce the *modus vivendi* but that they are prepared to make a good solid effort to settle this question for good, if possible, by arbitration, so that an equitable, reasonable, and judicial arrangement may be arrived at.

(11.45.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: The hon. Gentleman has in his speech pointed out some of the great difficulties which encompass this question, and which show the extreme necessity of caution in discussing this matter. I do not think Her Majesty's Government require to be shown that the subject should be handled with the greatest caution, and that, if possible, it should be brought to an early conclusion. We have done all we possibly can to accomplish that object, permanently, if possible, if not, temporarily. As to the *modus vivendi*, which the hon. Gentleman says has excited very strong feeling in Newfoundland, we still hope that it may be found practicable. The hon. Gentleman says he has seen the statement in a telegram that Her Majesty's Government are averse to arbitration. I do not think that is the case, and having read the Report of what took place in the French Chamber, *in extenso*, I think what the French Minister said is the very reverse of what the hon. Gentleman has stated. The French Minister said that there were probably some questions to be brought forward "on which we might be averse to arbitration," but on that and another point the British Government were probably willing to take arbitration. I think we should be very careful of the feelings of the people of Newfoundland, and, by moderation in insisting on a settlement, show that we appreciate their strong feeling. Anything which interferes with their industry necessarily must be unpopular with them. At the same time we have obligations under treaty, and if doubt has arisen as to the interpretation of that treaty, it is most desirable that it should be settled without the slightest risk of quarrel between the two great nations. But there are some points which we cannot refer to arbitration—they are our natural rights. But there are subsidiary points which could not have been foreseen when the treaties were framed, and as to which I trust and believe Her Majesty's Government would not be averse to arbitration. But if such an arbitration is to be successful it is evident that, in the first place, there must be concurrence among all the parties, and there must be agreement also as to the order of preference. These things are not easily done, but I hope they will be accomplished, if not otherwise, by arbitration. Ever since the Government has been in office, no stone has been left unturned to bring about an amicable settlement of this long-pending difference, and it is, at all events, a matter of great satisfaction to know that collisions have been avoided, the good feeling of the officers employed having mainly conduced to that result.

(11.50.) MR. W. REDMOND: I did not propose to intervene again, but I must be allowed to say that Her Majesty's Government did not properly or adequately consult the people of Newfoundland before they arrived at this *modus vivendi*, which has been condemned in the French Chamber and by public opinion, and about which there is a very strong feeling in Newfoundland. I could understand if Her Majesty's Government had been brought to this *modus vivendi* under pressure from France, their saying to the people of Newfoundland, "We have been obliged, through pressure of circumstances to concur with French opinions for the time being," and that would have been an argument in favour of the position of Her Majesty's Government with the people of Newfoundland. But the people of Newfoundland are able to say that Her Majesty's Government were not forced into this *modus vivendi*, which is distasteful to French opinion. They can say "French opinion is as much opposed to it as our own opinion here in Newfoundland." The whole difficulty lies in the fact that the people of Newfoundland were not consulted as to this *modus vivendi*, and I think it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government to invite representatives of the colony concerned to a discussion of the question. I am perfectly certain that had the people of Newfoundland been asked to send delegates to discuss the *modus vivendi* they would have sent representatives who would have been consulted by Her Majesty's Government, and who would have been thoroughly informed as to what was necessary for the time being. Had that been done, the feeling of the people of Newfoundland would not have been nearly so strong in the matter. It only remains for Her Majesty's Government to bring about a settlement of the question as speedily as possible, and that can only be done by a formal invitation to the Government of Newfoundland to send delegates. I have asked that repeatedly of the right hon. Gentleman, and he has always replied, not that a formal invitation had been sent, but that the Government would be very glad indeed to see representatives of Newfoundland.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: May I remind the hon. Member that I stated the other night that we had formally and repeatedly requested the Premier of Newfoundland to come to this country, and that if he brought delegates with him we should be glad to receive them.

MR. W. REDMOND: I did not understand that to be the right hon. Gentleman's answer to the questions which I put, and it is not in accordance with my information. I only hope that when the Newfoundland delegates do arrive they will be thoroughly consulted; and I trust this will be a lesson to Her Majesty's Government not to enter into any engagement on behalf of responsible colonies of the Empire without first thoroughly, and in a satisfactory manner, consulting the chosen representatives of such colonies.

*(11.55.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I quite admit that it is necessary that the colony of Newfoundland should be consulted, but it seems to me that all parties might come to an arrangement by means of arbitration. What I do ask is that questions of interpretation of the treaty should be judicially decided by arbitration. Now, Sir, we have made considerable progress, and as there are numerous questions still remaining on this Vote, in regard to salaries and other matters for discussion, I move that you now report Progress and ask leave to sit again.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I am sorry I cannot consent to the proposal of the hon. Gentleman. We have been discussing this Vote for eight hours, and surely, if there is to be any regard for proportion, eight hours are sufficient for the consideration of the Vote. I move that the Question be now put.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Question is, "That the Original Question be now put."

DR. TANNER and SIR G. CAMPBELL were named as Tellers for the "Noes."

DR. TANNER: Mr. Courtney, I did not speak on this occasion at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I heard the hon. Gentleman say "No."

DR. TANNER: I congratulate the Chairman on his acuteness of hearing. I decline to tell, Mr. Courtney.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member for Mid Cork says he did not challenge a Division, he is at liberty to decline to tell; but if, as I understand, he did challenge a Division, he is bound to tell.

DR. TANNER: I can assure the Chairman of Committees I made no statement whatsoever on the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

(12.2.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 143; Noes 39.—(Div. List, No. 47.)

Question put, "That the Original Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 143, Noes 39.—(Div. List, No. 47.)

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

It being after Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee to sit again upon Wednesday.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.

(No. 220.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

*(12.20.) MR. BAIRD (Glasgow, Central): I beg to move the Second Reading of the Clause which stands in my name. Under the Bill, as it stands, shipowners may be required to have their load-lines fixed, and they will have the choice either of a Surveyor appointed by the Committee of Lloyd's Register, or of one appointed by the Board of Trade. If there is reason to believe that the load-line fixed is not the best one, there are no means of getting it altered until modifications have been arrived at with the Board of Trade. The Bill is based on the recommendation of the Load Line Committee, who, in their Report, expressed an opinion in favour of the setting up of a Body of a more representative character than the Board of Trade to deal with the matter. In the Schedule I have attached to the Bill I have provided such an Authority as is aimed at in the Report of the Committee; but I am not absolutely wedded to it, and shall be willing to alter it in any way the House may think desirable.

New Clause—

"The registered owner of any ship shall have a right of appeal from the decision of the Board of Trade, or of any corporation, association, or committee appointed by the Board of Trade for the purpose of fixing the disc of any such ship as aforesaid, to a committee, which shall be appointed from time to time by the President of the Board of Trade in accordance with the schedule to this Act,"—(*Mr. Baird,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

*(12.23.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I quite recognise the object of my hon. Friend in moving this clause, and entirely agree with him in the desire that the load-line should be fixed by some body of experts rather than by the Board of Trade. But the proposal of my hon. Friend is that, when the shipowner has chosen his own tribunal for the fixing of the load-line, if he is dissatisfied with the decision of that tribunal he should have an appeal to another tribunal. I hope my hon. Friend will not press this Amendment. If he will withdraw it, I will undertake on Report to obviate one of the objections he has raised as to the shortness of the term before which this Bill comes into effect. I will move to substitute six months for three. That will give a longer time for the formation of any such Association as is contemplated in the Bill, and will enable the shipowners on the north-west coast to form a Committee to fix a load-line for their ships.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported.

As amended, to be considered upon Wednesday.

House adjourned at half after
Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 15th April, 1890.

QUESTIONS.

AMERICAN QUESTIONS DUTIES ON BRITISH CUTLERY.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state the amount of the duty upon British cutlery and hardware imported into the United States; and, in the event of there being any truth in the Report that it is to be still further increased, if diplomatic efforts will be used to modify such intention in the direction of those so successfully employed by Germany when, upon a recent occasion, Spain thought of putting a prohibiting duty upon German goods?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): It would be impossible to state, within the limits of an answer in this House, what the duties on cutlery and hardware in the United States are. But particulars will be found in the Return of Foreign Import Duties laid before the House in 1885 (H. C., 178 of 1885). As regards contemplated additional duties, we are not in possession of detailed or official information. The introduction of the new Tariff Bill has been deferred for the present, and, under these circumstances, the Government do not propose to take any steps at the present moment.

LONDON TRAMWAYS.

Mr. THOMAS HENRY BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, as portions of Tramways (in London) will, in the course of next year, become subject to the option of purchase reserved to Local Authorities under "The Tramways Act, 1870," and as the London County Council has passed a resolution in support of the proposal to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the operation of that Act, and to consider and report as to the desirability of further legislation in the interests of the public with reference to tramways (notice relating to Orders of the Day, 9th May next), whether the Government will consent to the immediate appointment of the proposed Select Committee in order that the inquiry may commence without any delay?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: Tramway legislation is, no doubt, of great importance to the London County Council, but it is of still greater importance to other Local Authorities, who have not, so far as I am aware, expressed any opinion with regard to it; and, under all the circumstances, I am not prepared to grant a Committee without debate.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the London County Council are of opinion that this question is so important that they have been carefully considering the whole matter, that they are prepared to give evidence if a Committee is appointed, and that the Tramway Companies themselves appreciate the necessity of the inquiry?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: That may be very possible.

BELFAST SCHOOLS.

Dr. FOX (King's County, Tullamore): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what was the total cost to the State per child in average attendance in the Belfast Model School for the year ending 31st March, 1889; what was the corresponding figure for the St. Enoch National Schools, Belfast; how many monitors or pupil teachers from the Belfast Model School have been appointed teachers in the Belfast National Schools during the past five years; how many in National Schools outside Belfast; and what are the corresponding numbers for the St. Enoch National Schools, Belfast, under the management of the Rev. Hugh Hanna, D.D.?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): The Commissioners of National Education report that the total cost to the State per child referred to in the first paragraph was £3 1s. 3d., or including charge on Board of Works Vote and cost of staff of residential pupil teachers, £4 0s. 8d. The corresponding figure for the St. Enoch National Schools was £1 15s. 7d. Two monitors and 27 pupil teachers were appointed teachers in the circumstances indicated in the third paragraph. In National Schools outside Belfast the numbers were three monitors and 33 pupil teachers. In the St. Enoch National Schools in Belfast eight monitors were so appointed. There are no pupil teachers employed there. In these schools outside Belfast none were appointed.

ENCUMBERED ESTATES ACT.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what proportion of the value of the sales which have taken place under "The Encumbered Estates Act, 1848," is estimated to relate to houses and buildings?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Registrar to the Land Judges reports that there are no means of supplying the information indicated in this question, but that, speaking generally, the house property sold was inconsiderable.

LAND PURCHASE RETURNS.

Mr. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with regard to the Return Land Purchase (Ireland) (Names of Landowners), No. 81, of 1889, whether he can state, in reference to the particulars in the column headed Rental, what amount of the rental of £214,922 14s. 4d. consists of non-judicial rents, what amount consists of judicial rents fixed under the Act of 1881, and what amount consists of judicial rents revised under the Act of 1887; whether he will arrange that in the continuation of the above-named Return, to be presented on the Motion of the right hon. Member for Newcastle, the three classes of rents above alluded to will be separately set forth; and whether he will state the numbers of the above-mentioned three classes of tenants respectively subsisting in Ireland up to the latest available date?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners report that it would not be practicable to make the distinction indicated in the first paragraph of the question without investigating every individual case, which would be a work of considerable labour. I may, however, point out that judicial rents were not

revised under the Act of 1887. The enactment referred to solely provided for the temporary adjustment of such rents for the years 1887, 1888, and 1889. A reference to the monthly Return of proceedings of the Land Commission, which is regularly laid before Parliament, will show the number of cases in which judicial rents have been fixed. There is no record of the number of tenants who have not had judicial rents fixed.

THE REV. J. BROWN, C.C.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Rev. J. Brown, C.C. of Ramsgrange, County Wexford, has received a communication from the Resident Magistrate of the district, informing him that he would be followed by the police if he did not refrain from holding meetings of the National League; and whether, in pursuance of this threat, it is true that a police constable followed Father Brown into the house of a dying woman; and, if so, whether the police acted in accordance with their instructions, and whether this part of the County Wexford is quite free from crime?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not yet been able to obtain the information which would enable me to answer the question.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Are we to understand that a matter such as this can occur without the knowledge of the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is a question whether it did occur.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I beg to give notice that I will repeat the question to-morrow.

THE LAND PURCHASE BILL.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the meeting of Fermanagh landlords held in Enniskillen, on Saturday, the 5th April, at which resolutions were passed unanimously, complaining of several of the provisions of the Land Purchase Bill; and whether the Government intend to take any action in regard to the Bill, in view of the attitude taken up by the Fermanagh landlords?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Government will pursue the same course with regard to this Bill that has always been pursued with regard to measures submitted to Parliament—namely, to take advantage of arguments and expressions of opinion, from whatever quarter of the House they come, to make the measure as perfect as possible.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Will criminal proceedings be taken against Lord Erne for describing the Bill as one for the expulsion of the English garrison?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have seen the letter of Lord Erne, who is not, however, in the councils of the Government.

DISHORNING OF CATTLE.

Dr. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland if the dishorning of cattle is an illegal operation in Ireland; and, if so, will he take steps to enforce the law, so as to prevent this cruelty being inflicted upon dumb animals?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): The law on this subject is at present in a somewhat unsettled state. In England the Queen's Bench Division decided, in 1889, that the practice of dishorning cattle as proved before them was illegal under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. In Ireland, the Exchequer Division had previously, in the year 1884, come to the same conclusion. A contrary decision, however, had been pronounced by the Common Pleas Division in Ireland in the year 1885, on the evidence presented to the Court as to the character and effects of the practice, which evidence (as Lord Coleridge observed) was very different from that given in the English case; and in Scotland the Court of Session appear to have also decided in favour of the legality of the practice. The matter recently came before me officially. It appeared to me desirable that the opinion of the Queen's Bench Division in Ireland should be taken on the point, upon full and satisfactory evidence, and for that purpose I gave directions that the attention of the police should be called to the matter, with a view to instituting a prosecution if the practice were found to continue to exist in Ireland.

Dr. FITZGERALD: In consequence of the answer of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the subject on the Estimates, and move the reduction of the Vote.

THE LANDED ESTATES COURT.

Mr. SEXTON, who had the following question on the Paper,—To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will lay upon the Table a Return of Irish Estates in the Landed Estates Court for sale, showing the location of each estate, the name of the landlord, the rateable valuation, the actual present rental, the highest offer made in each case in which there has been any offer of purchase, and the period for which each estate has been in the hands of the Court?—said: I will ask this question on Thursday, as I understand the right hon. Gentleman is not ready to answer it.

"THE CROWN *V.* RYE."

Dr. TANNER (Cork, Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Messrs. Roche and Butler, Resident Magistrates, adjourned the Court in the case of "the Crown *v.* Rye" at Crookstown, against the repeatedly expressed wish of three Local Justices, including Mr. Harold; whether the report is true that the adjournment was moved in order to secure the attendance of Corcoran, the man who was wounded, and that after the adjournment one of the Resident Magistrates proceeded to Corcoran's house and succeeded, without much difficulty, in bringing him into Court, when he swore that Rye fired twice wilfully at him; whether it has been now proved that District Inspector St. George had not summoned Corcoran to attend as a witness in this case, and did not, as alleged, procure a car to convey the wounded man to Court, a distance of three miles; and whether any notice will be taken of the delay to justice in this case?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that it is the case that the Court was adjourned for a short time, with the object and with the result indicated in the second paragraph of the question, but that it is not the case that the adjournment was against the wishes of the Local Justices present, including the gentleman named. Corcoran was not summoned, he having been bound by recognizances to attend. There was no delay of justice beyond the interruption occasioned by Corcoran's reluctance to attend.

Dr. TANNER: Is it not the fact that Mr. Harold did not attend on the last occasion in consequence of being in the employment of Captain Rye?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no information on that point.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the matter, and also to a breach of privilege of this House, which has occurred in connection with it.

THE PURCHASE OF LAND ACT, 1885.

Mr. KEAY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many acres of land in Ireland have been purchased by the Irish Land Commission under Clause 5 of "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885;" what amount has been expended by the Land Commission in purchasing the same; how many acres have been sold by the Land Commission under the above clause, what amount has been realised for them, and what number of acres so purchased does the Commission still hold; what is the number of acres and purchase value of holdings resumed by the Land Commission from tenant purchasers under Clause 3; and how many of these have been re-sold to fresh purchasers, and at what price?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not been able to obtain a report on the subject, owing to the insufficiency of the notice given.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS BILL.

Captain VERNEY (Bucks, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when it is the intention of the Government to print their Reformatory and Industrial Schools Bill?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): The Bill has been read a first time and printed, and will be circulated immediately.

TARIFF OF RATES IN THE DOCKYARDS.

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley): I beg to ask the Frst Lord of the Admiralty if he will introduce into the Royal Dockyards a similar system to that in force in private yards of furnishing to all workmen engaged on piecework a schedule or tariff of rates for each description of such piecework, such rates having been fixed from time to time by the managers of the yards in conference with delegates selected by the workmen?

*The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): War-ship work is now so complicated and varied that no simple scale of rates could be fixed. Every endeavour is now made to fix rates after practical trial of the wages that can be earned on the different jobs. It is not considered desirable that the rates paid for piecework should be made a matter of arrangement between the local officers and workmen at the dockyards; but the Local Authorities now have full power of revising the rates.

H.M.S. *BARRACOUTA.*

Mr. HERBERT KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham), who had the following question on the Paper—To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the expression of regret by the Coroner's Jury in the recent *Barracouta* case at Sheerness—

> "That the Admiralty had not carried out the recommendations of the jury in the *Thistle* explosion in 1869, by providing hospital accommodation for injured men at Sheerness, and thus caused the necessity of sending cases to Chatham;"

whether he is aware that there is already at Sheerness a military hospital which is never full, where cases of accident could be treated; and whether he will take immediate steps to put an end to the unnecessary suffering caused by the present arrangements?—said: At the request of the First Lord I beg to postpone the question until Thursday.

THE NEW IRONCLADS.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.); I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can state the approximate aggregate weight of the Palliser bolts and nuts to be used in the new ironclads

Renown, *Repulse*, *Resolution*, *Revenge*, *Hood*, *Royal Sovereign*, *Royal Oak*, and *Ramilies*?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: The aggregate weight of fastenings to armour-plates in the case of the ships specified is, roughly, about 1,000 tons. It should, however, be understood that the armour bolts in question have the reduced shanks proposed by the late Sir William Palliser, but in other respects they are not made on his plan.

THE CASE OF J. DAVIES.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will inquire into the case of J. Davies, recently an operative in Pembroke Dockyard, mutilated for life in the discharge of his duty; if he will make inquiries as to the statement that, after this mutilation occurred, a guard was placed round the machinery; why this guard was not placed there previously if the machinery was dangerous; and if, as J. Davies is now incapable of any work, it would be possible in any way to provide for him?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: The case of James Davies has been brought to my notice. This man's left hand was unfortunately injured in October, 1887, while he was oiling a machine in motion. The wheels in which his hand was caught are 6ft. above the ground, and were not considered dangerous; but, as this man happened to get injured, a guard was subsequently placed around them. It would be impossible to guard all machines, so that men could not by any mischance be injured by them. The gratuity granted to Davies was the highest possible under established regulations in the case of injuries short of total and complete disability, namely, a gratuity equal to the whole of a year's wages at the rate of pay received at the time of injury. These regulations are based upon the Superannuation Acts Amendment Act of 1887, and have been presented to Parliament in the form of a Treasury Warrant. Davies is still reported as capable of contributing to his own support to a small degree; but even if he were now totally unable to do any work, no further grant could be made to him out of any money voted by Parliament.

*MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): Will the noble Lord say whether machinery in dockyards is subject to the usual inspection?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: Yes, Sir, it is.

THE LATE GENERAL SIR WILLIAM JONES.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the following paragraph in the *Times*, of the 11th April, in reference to the funeral of the distinguished veteran, General Sir William Jones, G.C.B.; and if he can explain the circumstances of this painful case—

> "The deceased officer recently expressed an earnest desire to receive the last honours paid to a soldier, and intimated his wish to His Serene Highness Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, who immediately communicated with the War Office. A military funeral was then sanctioned, and the necessary instructions to the troops now in Dublin appeared on Wednesday, in the garrison orders. The funeral was arranged to start yesterday morning from the late General's residence, Lansdown Lodge, and at the hour appointed a force of police was drawn up outside, and a number of people assembled to witness the ceremony. After a delay, however, it became evident that some hitch had taken place. It appeared that on the previous evening a telegram had been received from Lord Wolseley countermanding the military funeral. The remains were conveyed to Mount Jerome Cemetery."

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Nothing is known in the War Office of any arrangements having been made by the General Officer commanding in Ireland, as stated by the *Times*. On the 8th inst. a telegram was received from the General Officer commanding in Ireland asking if a military funeral could be given to the late General Sir W. Jones, but as the officer was not at the time of his decease "on full pay, employed on the staff, or in the exercise of any military command," a reply was sent expressing regret that the regulations did not admit of a military funeral being granted.

SIR E. WATKIN: Is it the fact that a General Officer of distinction, although he may not have been in full employment at the time of his death, is not to have military honours paid to him? Is the statement in the *Times* true, that the Quartermaster-General has authority to prevent military honours being paid, although permission has been given by the War Office?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The right to grant a military funeral rests with the War Office, but this case did not come within the rules. The Adjutant-General has absolute power to deal with all such cases, and he adopted the ordinary rule laid down.

THE VOLUNTEER OPERATIONS.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that the absence of regular troops from the operations at Folkestone caused disappointment to the Volunteers, and if, as regular troops were allowed to co-operate with the Volunteers at Portsmouth, he would, considering the vicinity of Shorncliffe to Dover, take the necessary steps to procure the presence of regular troops to act with the Volunteers at Dover in future reviews?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Full discretion in these matters is left to the General Officer commanding the district. As the hon. Member wishes it, I will, with a view to the future, ascertain from the General Officer at Dover the reasons which led him to decide as he did.

IRELAND—CANTEEN SUPPLIES.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether complaints have reached him that nearly all the regiments stationed in Ireland obtain, or are compelled to get, most of their canteen and other supplies from the London Army and Navy Co-operative Stores, and that this occurs in consequence of a few officers of the regiments and districts in question being more or less interested in these Stores; and whether it is competent for any officer, being a member or shareholder in the Army and Navy Co-operative Stores, and holding a responsible command either in Ireland or the English provinces, to promote the pecuniary advancement of the Stores against and over the claims of local traders?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: No complaints on this subject have reached me. Regimental canteens are under the management of Committees, which act independently of the Secretary of State for War. The members of these Committees deal for their stores where they can get them best and at the cheapest rate.

DR. TANNER: Is not the right hon. Gentleman aware that, as a matter of fact, the major part of these canteens are supplied from the Army and Navy Stores?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: No, Sir; I am not aware of that.

DR. TANNER: If I substantiate the assertion, and show that a certain number of canteens are so supplied, will the right hon. Gentleman promise to deal with the matter?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I cannot undertake to do that. Most of the regiments deal entirely with local tradesmen. All of them do so largely, but I am not prepared to lay down compulsory regulations.

DR. TANNER: Is not the right hon. Gentleman aware that complaints have been made in this House on several occasions that gentlemen who have left the Service spend their time in touting for the Stores?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I am not aware of it, although, of course, it may have been said.

RATING OF VOLUNTEER DRILL HALLS.

MR. JAMES STEVENSON (South Shields): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the circumstance that summonses have been issued and are now pending before the South Shields magistrates, against the Commanding Officer of the Artillery and Rifle Volunteers in that town, for payment of Poor Rate on their respective drill halls; whether he is aware that this is the first time that the Poor Law Authorities have sought to enforce a claim for Poor Rate on these drill halls; and whether he can give any protection in the circumstances against what is practically a new tax on the Volunteer Service in respect of buildings provided by the Volunteers for their own purposes and without any profit from their use?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): I understand that proceedings have been instituted in South Shields for the recovery of Poor Rates which have been assessed on Volunteer drill halls. The question as to the liability of these premises to be assessed is a question of law which must be left to the decision of the Court. The Local Government Board have no power whatever to protect the Volunteer Service from assessment to local rates for premises occupied by them when the premises are legally liable to such rates.

THE CENSUS OF 1891.

Mr. WOODALL: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what arrangements are being made for the taking of the Census of 1891; and whether the authority of Parliament will be required, and, in the event of legislation being necessary, when is it intended to introduce Bills for the purpose?

Mr. LONG: Legislation will be required for the taking of the Census of 1891. A Committee has been appointed to inquire as to the expediency of making any changes in the mode in which the Census has been taken and other matters in connection with the Census. The Report of the Committee has not yet been received, but as soon as it has been made the arrangements for the next Census will be considered by Her Majesty's Government, and the preparation of the necessary measure on the subject will be proceeded with.

PROFESSOR RUTHERFORD AND VIVISECTION.

Sir WILLIAM PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to a letter in the *Scottish Leader* for 27th January, 1890, containing allegations of cruelty against Professor Rutherford in experimenting upon a living dog at the Edinburgh Medical Schools, which would involve infringement of the Act of Parliament 39 and 40 Vic. c. 77; whether Professor Rutherford has reported these experiments to the Inspector, or if inquiry has been made by the Inspector respecting them; if the Home Secretary will lay upon the Table full particulars of the same, together with any Reports made to him by the Inspector, or his deputy, with reference to this particular case, or to other cases of alleged infringement of the Act; if the experiments referred to were performed under Certificate C, in conformity with the Act, by whom such certificate was signed; whether this certificate releases the holder from compliance with Sub-section 3 of the proviso to Section 3 of the Act; and whether such certificate, being held in addition to a licence, is granted for a single experiment or limited series of experiments, or is granted for an unlimited number of experiments and extends over a period of months or years?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; my attention was called to the letter in question. The only allegation in that letter which called for inquiry on my part was that the dog was not killed after the lecture, but kept for other purposes. The Inspector inquired into this, and reported to me that no dogs or other animals used by Professor Rutherford under Certificate C in illustration of his lectures has been allowed to recover from the full effect of the anæsthetic before being killed. An operator under Certificate C is not required to furnish Reports of his experiments. I am not, therefore, able to lay particulars upon the Table of the House. The experiments were under Certificate C, which was signed by the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, and it does not release the holder from the provisions of the Act referred to. Such certificate runs with the licence and continue valid as long as the licence is renewed. The certificate in question was granted in the year 1882.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, having regard to the increasing discontent among all ranks of the Constabulary at the continued non-fulfilment by successive Governments of the promise to deal with the question of their superannuation, he can now state if it is the intention of the Government to deal with the matter, or to leave it to each jurisdiction to promote a private Bill for its own Force; and, in such latter case, what will be the position of the Metropolitan Police?

Mr. MATTHEWS: It is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this Session dealing with the question of superannuation both in the Metropolitan and the Provincial Forces.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE BILL.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government have decided to refer the Public Trustee Bill and the Trust Companies Bill to a Select Committee, with power to take evidence, or to a Grand Committee?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): The Public Trustee Bill will be referred to the Grand Committee on Law.

UNITED STATES TARIFF BILL.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is a fact that the Ways and Means Committee of the United States Government have arrived at an agreement regarding the Sugar Schedule, whereby a reduction of revenue upon sugar imported into the United States of from 30 to 35 million dollars per annum is reported; and, if not, whether he can state the exact amount of the proposed reduction, if any, and any further particulars with reference to the question?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have no information as to any proposed reduction of the duty of sugar imported into the United States. They have ascertained from Her Majesty's Minister at Washington that the new Tariff Bill has been postponed owing to the death of a member. The changes proposed in the Bill have not been made public.

THE WEST INDIAN MAIL CONTRACT.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the statement which appeared in the *Morning Post* of 31st March last, to the effect that the new contract between the Post Office and the Royal Mail Company for the conveyance of the West Indian Mails, though not signed, is virtually concluded, and will come into force in June next, is correct; whether he has received any memorials from the Colony in favour of the contract being granted to the Royal Mail Company; and whether it is the intention of the Government to bring the contract, before being closed, under the notice of Parliament; and, if not, whether he will state the particulars of the new contract, especially with regard to the maximum time to be occupied on the voyages?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, University of Cambridge): A tender of the Royal Mail Company has been accepted for the conveyance of West India Mails from the 1st of July next, when the present contract expires. The contract is now in preparation, and will, in the usual course, be submitted to Parliament for approval, with a statement as to its terms. I hope it will be possible so to submit the new contract before the date appointed for its commencement. Before accepting this tender Her Majesty's Government elicited the opinions of the West India colonies, which, equally with this country, are interested in the services and contribute to its support, and ascertained that they were almost unanimous in desiring that the new contract should be given to the Royal Mail Company.

CABLE BETWEEN HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, AND BERMUDA.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN: I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the cause of the delay in laying the cable, contracted for by Her Majesty's Government with a private company, between Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Bermuda; and, when may the public expect that the cable will be in operation?

*Mr. JACKSON: Under the power given to the Treasury by Section 4 of the contract with the International Cable Company, which was approved by the House of Commons on May 9 last, the time allowed for laying the cable has been extended to Midsummer next, so as to avoid the risks attending any attempt to lay the cable during the winter months. I am not able to state the precise date when the cable will be available for traffic. No doubt the company will do all in its power to complete at the earliest date, because the subsidy does not become payable until the cable is in working order.

THE SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is the fact that about 200 men of the Upper

Division of Clerks in the Savings Bank Department of the General Post Office, whose length of service averages from 15 to 20 years, have been reduced to the Lower Division of the Civil Service; whether these 200 men have been ordered to give a daily attendance of seven hours instead of six, on and from the 16th instant, at a rate of remuneration for the additional hour which is about one half, and in some cases one third, of the amount paid for each of the other six hours, being, in fact, no more than that now given to Junior Clerks of the Lower Division; have both these Orders received the sanction of the Treasury; and, has the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown been taken upon the question whether these Orders, involving an alteration of status, interfere with the legal rights of the persons affected?

*MR. RAIKES: I have to point out that there are no Upper Division Clerks in the Savings Bank, and also that there are no longer any Lower Division Clerks. The question of assimilating "the old establishment" of the Savings Bank to the new organisation, emanating from the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, has presented much difficulty, and, after giving the subject the most anxious attention, Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that the best way of meeting this difficulty is to nominate officers of the Second and Third Classes to the New Second Division, thereby letting them secure the very considerable pecuniary advantages which are afforded by the Order in Council of March 21st last. I have, accordingly, given effect to this decision, and am satisfied that substantial benefit has been conferred on the officers in question, and that no legal rights have been interfered with. The hon. Member will, I think, agree with me in the views I have expressed when he has examined the full bearing of the change.

THE MADRAS SLAVE TRADE.

MR. WALTER M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the following statement, which has appeared in several papers:—

> "Information has been received in London which leaves no doubt of the extent of the horrible traffic described as 'the Madras slave trade,' the existence of which has hitherto been only suspected. At a trial at Rangoon one witness, a Madragese girl, declared that she had been forcibly put on board a steamer at Negapatam, taken to Rangoon, and sold for 80 rupees. Another girl, who was seized as she was proceeding to join her husband, was taken to a house, kept a close prisoner for three days, and then sold for 90 rupees. In fact, sufficient evidence was given to show that, although Rangoon is supposed to have an ample police force, the importation and selling of girls goes on systematically;"

and whether the evidence given at this trial has been brought before the notice of the Indian Government; and, if not, whether he will cause inquiries to be made in Madras and in Rangoon as to the facts?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has seen the statements referred to, and also that the man who committed the offences mentioned has been convicted, and sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. The Governments of Madras and Burma have had their attention directed for many years past to the migration from Madras to Rangoon, and to the necessity for carefully watching it. The law against offences of the kind mentioned in the question is strong, and will be vigorously enforced.

CUSTOMS—DUTIES ON VIOLINS.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary of the Treasury if he would now state under what authority a violin (consigned from Paris to Mr. D. Lawrie, of Glasgow, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras), dated 1696, and purporting to be the work of Antonius Stradivarius, of Cremona, was on the 25th March detained by the Customs Authorities at Dover; if it is true, as stated by the station master at Dover in explanation, that its detention was due to the fact that in consequence of violins, represented as the work of classic makers, having been imported, consignees of such instruments are now required to state whether the imported article is for private use or sale; and, if for sale, to prove the accuracy of the date and name of the label before the instruments are given up by the Customs; whether the fact of an old violin having passed the Customs is to be taken as a Government certificate of the genuineness of its date and signature; and if the regulation is intended to protect purchasers of violins against imposition, why an exception is made in the case of violins declared to be for private use, but which may subsequently be sold?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The violin in question, the value of which was declared to be £80, was imported from France, and was found upon examination to be marked "Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis Faciebat, Anno 1696," and was detained under Sections 3 (Sub-section 1 b) and 16 (Sub-section 1) of the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887. The violin was at once delivered on the facts being reported to the Board, although the value was declared at £80, and not £800, as stated in the hon. Member's former question. The fact of any violin having passed the Customs is no guarantee of the accuracy of the description which it may bear, the action of the Department, in the absence of specific information, being confined to inscriptions obviously misleading. It is assumed in the case of a violin imported for private use that the purchaser has satisfied himself as to the genuine character or otherwise of the article; but should it subsequently become an object of trade after passing the Customs, if it infringes the provisions of the Act, the person selling it would be liable to the penalties involved.

THE ESTIMATES.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government intend to take any steps to realise the expectation held out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in relation to the Estimates, in the discussion on the subject on 30th April, 1889, when he used the following words:—

> "I trust the Government may be able at an early date, possibly next Session, again to submit proposals to remove what all on both sides of the House consider to be the present unsatisfactory state of things?"

.*MR. W. H. SMITH: I should be very glad, indeed, if it was in my power to make proposals to the House to improve the conditions under which Estimates are considered and voted by the House. But the Government have been as yet unable to devise any plan in substitution for the present system which would secure the general support of the House, without which it would be most unadvisable to introduce any changes.

DESTITUTION IN EAST LONDON.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been directed to a paragraph which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of yesterday evening to the effect that on Saturday the East London Coroner had before him the case of a man who had dropped dead at the feet of his paymaster and whose death the doctor said was from starvation; and whether the right hon. Gentleman can inform the House whether other cases of a like lamentable nature have been reported as having occurred at the East-end; and whether it will be possible to do something to organise labour in that quarter so that such cases may not occur in future?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman has not given me any notice whatever of the question. I do not complain of that, but I am sure he will see—and the House will see—that a demand upon the Government to organise labour without any notice whatever is one which the Government cannot undertake to deal with. I am not aware of any measures which any Government could take which would prevent such a sad and sorrowful occurrence as that to which the hon. Gentleman has referred.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the question whether information of other cases of a like kind have reached the Government.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No such information has reached Her Majesty's Government. These matters are dealt with, as a rule, by the Local Authorities, who have ample means of dealing with them.

THE CREWE MURDER.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to give notice that on the Vote for the salary of the Home Secretary, or upon the next Vote on Account, I will challenge the reply which the Home Secretary gave last evening with regard to the case of Richard Davies and will take the opinion of the House upon the subject.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Francis Tress Barry, Esq., for New Windsor.

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Reports of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed, and the Proceedings thereon shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. 5."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

(4.8.) MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I rise to a point of order as to the form in which this Motion is made. When a similar Motion was made by the President of the Board of Trade, in the absence of the First Lord of the Treasury, last year, there were some words at the end of the Motion which have now been dropped out. Those words were—"But after such proceedings are disposed of no opposed business shall be taken." I wish to ask whether, if the Resolution is passed in its present shape, it would be possible to take any opposed business after the Reports of Supply and Ways and Means have been disposed of?

*(4.9.) MR. SPEAKER: It is quite true that the words quoted by the hon. Gentleman were in the Resolution of last year, but I am clearly of opinion that they are not necessary. The words of the Standing Order would come into operation, and the business of the Sitting would be dealt with according to the Rules applicable to measures taken after 12 o'clock.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Then, I gather from your ruling that last year something was passed which was not necessary?

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not know that the words were unnecessary, but they were surplusage.

(4.10.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I would suggest an Amendment in the nature of a compromise. As the Resolution stands, the right hon. Gentleman could bring on Report of Supply and have discussions upon it at any time of the night. I would suggest that after the words, "The proceedings thereon shall not be interrupted," we should insert, "If entered upon before 12 o'clock." By stopping the discussion which might be before the House a few minutes before 12, we could proceed at once with the Reports of Supply and of Ways and Means.

Amendment proposed, after the words "That the," to insert the words "Proceedings on the."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted."

*(4.12.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I do not think the proposal of the hon. Gentleman can be accepted. The hon. Gentleman proposes that we should enter upon the consideration of the Report of Supply any time before 12, and go on to any time after. I should prefer to adhere to the Rule adopted in successive Sessions. If the proposal of the hon. Gentleman were adopted, it might be necessary to ask the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees to apply the Closure; and it is possible that there might be two or three Divisions, with the result that we should waste half an hour or three-quarters of an hour and not arrive at Report of Supply. In these circumstances, I must ask the House to adopt the Rule which has been in force during the last two or three Sessions. I trust that the Motion of the hon. Gentleman will not be pressed, because it must be negatived, and that, again, would occupy the time of the House.

(4.15.) MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I think it is a very questionable kind of enjoyment which the right hon. Gentleman is good enough to give the House the facility of acquiring. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Motion has frequently been made in previous Sessions, but I doubt very much whether the right hon. Gentleman can show a precedent for making a Motion of this kind so early in the Session. Nothing has happened in the present Session which renders this exceptional haste on the part of the right hon. Gentleman reasonable or to be expected. There is evidence forthcoming of a kind which the right hon. Gentleman would be the last person to question the force of—that this Session the House has been exceptionally expeditious in the performance of its work, and that it has been performed in an exceptionally satisfactory way. [Mr. W. H. SMITH shook his head.] The right hon. Gentleman appears to question that statement; but the right hon. Gentleman will not question the authority of the Chairman of Ways and Means. My right hon. Friend told his constituents the other day that the progress of business in the present Session has been very great, and that there has been a remarkable amount of work in Supply before Easter this year. Looking at the past my right hon. Friend thought that the business of Supply this Session will not occupy a larger amount of time than it ought to occupy, and that, so far, the House of Commons has discharged its business well. It is rather surprising, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman should have thought it necessary to make this Motion in view of the exceptionally satisfactory despatch of business by the House. I do not think there is any great force in the objection of the right hon. Gentleman to the Amendment of my hon. Friend; but at least there ought to be a very clear and full understanding that on occasions when the right hon. Gentleman is asked to provide a full opportunity for discussing upon Report questions that have been inadequately dealt with in the proceedings in Committee, a large interpretation should be given to such an undertaking.

(4.20.) MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I wish to point out that a similar Motion was brought forward last year, and that Morning Sittings immediately after Easter appear to be becoming a regular Parliamentary custom. I had expected, however, on the present occasion that the First Lord of the Treasury would have said something in support of his proposal. No information has been given to the House as to the condition of Supply, or what obstacles have been met with in getting through Report of Supply as well as Supply itself. It is the common knowledge of the House that Supply is well advanced this Session. A similar Motion was passed on April 30 last year, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated then that 34 Votes in Supply had been got in 12 Sittings. But this Session the Government have got 52 Votes in Supply in eight Sittings. On February 25, 16 Supplementary Votes were presented to the House, and on that day all the Votes were obtained, the Report of the 16 Votes being taken next day without discussion of any kind. On February 27 the two remaining Supplementary Votes were taken, and the Report was obtained the next night after 12 o'clock without discussion. On March 17 the First Lord of the Admiralty got 16 Navy Votes in one Sitting—the expedition was supposed to be due to the fact that it was St. Patrick's Day, and that there were no Irish Members present—and the Report of 15 out of 16 of those Votes was got on Wednesday, March 19, after half-past 5 o'clock without any discussion. Practically, therefore, the Government are in a more favourable position as to Supply than they were last year, or than they have been for several years.

*(4.23.) MR. J. S. GATHORNE-HARDY (Kent, Medway): Hon. Members opposite seem to have forgotten that a few weeks ago the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir G. Trevelyan) brought forward a Motion dealing with the Sittings of the House, which was nearly carried, and the discussion on which showed that there was a disposition prevalent among hon. Members to put up with some sacrifices early in the Session in order to get away earlier in the autumn. It, therefore, seems to me to be absurd that hon. Gentlemen, having supported that Resolution, should now offer objections to this mild form of coercion which is sought to be put upon the House. The experience gained from this Motion in former years is, that it puts an end to obstruction on Report of Supply. If Report of Supply is brought forward before 12 o'clock it is generally talked out, while if it is brought on after midnight the general feeling of hon. Members has been that they wished to get home to bed, and hence those questions only have been discussed which needed discussion. I hope that the Government will stick to their guns, and I am sure they will be supported.

(4.25.) MR. SEXTON: I think the hon. Gentleman scarcely understands the point at issue. The Amendment of my hon. Friend really proposes that if the Report of Supply is taken before 12 o'clock it should not be talked out. A good deal has been said as to the progress made in Supply on St. Patrick's Day in the absence of the Irish Members. It is true that on that day a good many Irish Members were absent from the House; but it should be remembered that the Votes taken were English Votes, in which the sons of St. Patrick had no direct concern. Therefore, the benign influence of St. Patrick is a myth, and the Prime Minister was quite in error in attributing the progress made to the absence of the Irish Members. The First Lord of the Treasury has made out no case for his Motion. He referred to the proceedings of the House in the last three years, but I fail to see what that has to do with the matter. I think the House has treated the Government exceedingly well. They have obtained a Vote on Account for a period unusually long; they have almost gone through Class 1, and they have made some progress in Class 5. I think my hon. Friend is entitled, in a case of this kind, to ask from the Government some guarantee that only urgent business will be taken after 12 o'clock. Supply is in a very forward condition, and it is not the case that the Government have been unduly embarrassed in regard to Report of Supply. I am not aware of any circumstances that have arisen this Session to entitle the Government to anticipate obstruction of Report of Supply. If Report of Supply happens at any time to be urgent, why should not the Government bring it forward, say at 11 o'clock? It is no reply to say that three Divisions would be taken. I do not believe that would be so; but, even if it were, three Divisions would not occupy all the time between 11 and 12 o'clock. If the Motion be carried the Government will be able to put down Report of Supply whenever they please; and inasmuch as other business, such as a Scotch Endowment debate, may be taken first, we may be called upon to discuss Votes on Report at 1 o'clock in the morning or later. There is a growing tendency in the House to defer discussions on Votes until the Report stage; and, that being so, I would ask is it fair or expedient to pass a Rule under which the Government will be able to take Report of Supply at such an hour as will render adequate debate impossible and prevent the communication of the substance of the debate to the public? I think my hon. Friend has made a reasonable proposal, and one which, if adopted, will tend to facilitate rather than obstruct Supply.

(4.33.) MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I wish to give the House the reasons why I intend to support the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Labouchere.) I do not think any Government ought to have power to bring on Report of Supply at any time it chooses. I understand that, after what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley), my right hon. Friend (Mr. W. H. Smith) is willing to give a guarantee that Report of Supply will not be brought on at too late an hour. I think if my right hon. Friend will say it shall not be brought on in general circumstances after half-past 12 the House will be quite satisfied. Members on this side of the House are just as much interested as Gentlemen opposite in having this matter properly discussed, and no Party feeling ought to enter into the matter at all. It seems to me that there is nothing so detrimental to public business as to have important questions discussed on Report of Supply at an hour when many Members cannot attend. I think the hon. Member for Northampton has approached the question in a reasonable spirit, and I hope my right hon. Friend will deal with it in a similar spirit. I believe that Gentlemen in all parts of the House have the greatest confidence in his conduct of public business, and if he will only give a guarantee that Report of Supply will not be brought on at an unreasonable hour I am sure the hon. Member for Northampton will withdraw his Amendment.

*(4.34.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I can only speak by permission of the House, but I hope I may be allowed to say a few words in answer to what has fallen from my right hon. Friend (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck). I have not the slightest hesitation in giving the House an assurance that Report of Supply will not be brought on at an unreasonable hour. My Motion has not been made with the intention of enabling us to take an unreasonable course. On the contrary, I think I have a right to appeal to what took place last Session in order to prove that we have no desire to act unreasonably. If ever a question of importance has been

deferred until Report, an arrangement has been made which has been satisfactory to the House as a whole, although I admit it may not have pleased individual Members. I assure the House it will be my object, under such circumstances, in the future to make such an arrangement as will suit the general convenience of the House. My only desire is that business should not be obstructed, as it may be by a single Member under present circumstances. With this assurance, I hope the House will assent to the Motion.

(4.35.) Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): As I understand, the right hon. Gentleman has just given a guarantee, and I need not assure him that his word will be accepted at once. The right hon. Gentleman, however, has not replied to the request that he would favourably consider any suggestion from this side of the House in favour of the postponement of any particular matter of importance arising on Report. I hope the House understands perfectly well what we are asked by the right hon. Gentleman to do. We are asked to reverse all those reforms in the hours of the House carried four or five years ago in the expectation that the period of prolonged vigils, which were of such a torturing character in previous years, had been put an end to for ever. We find that is not the case, and two months after the commencement of the Session we are asked to go back to the old system of either all-night Sittings or half-night Sittings. I have had experience of all-night Sittings, and I do not wish to repeat it. The right hon. Gentleman, of course, has gone through similar experiences—in fact, we have gone through them together—and I congratulate him on the excellent health and spirits with which he has emerged from them. The hon. Gentleman who represents one of the Divisions of Kent said that in voting for the Motion his object was to shorten the Session and give us an opportunity for an early vacation—a thing we all desire. Well, those who supported the Motion of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow the other day can consistently support the Amendment of my hon. Friend to-day; for the result of that proposal of the leader of the House, if carried, will be to give us both longer Sittings and a longer Session. If I thought the proposal would have the effect of shortening the Session I should be found in the Lobby supporting it; but I am convinced that its effect will be not only to prolong our Sittings, but to prolong the Session. I am afraid, also, that its effect will be to lengthen our discussions in Supply, because if hon. Members find that they will have no adequate opportunity on Report of raising questions left in an unfinished state in Committee of Supply they will be tempted to prolong the discussions on that stage. Although I have known many occasions on which Report of Supply was a matter which could be passed over with brief discussion, or no discussion at all, I have known other occasions on which, owing to fresh information having been received on certain subjects subsequent to the debate in Supply, long and important discussions have occurred. It was, for instance, on the Report stage of Supply that my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) succeeded in getting the Clangorey prisoners released from their unjust imprisonment; and I remember many other occasions on which debate on Report has brought about important results. Then, I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury why he proposes this Resolution at this period of the Session? It may be that at a later period we shall find ourselves in the midst of a prolonged discussion on the Tithes Bill or the Irish Land Purchase Bill, and it would be time enough for the right hon. Gentleman to demand further facilities for the consideration of Government business when he finds himself in difficulties in regard to such measures. If he had made his Motion, say, a month hence, if the progress of business was so slow as to justify it, we, at any rate, should have raised no opposition to it.

(4.45.) THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. COURTNEY, Cornwall, Bodmin): Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word as to the Amendment before the Committee. If I understood the hon. Member for Northampton's interruption aright, he suggested to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that it would be quite sufficient for his purpose if the Division, on whatever subject might be before the House, were taken at 10 minutes to 12, so as to enable Report of Supply to come on soon after 12. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) thinks it would be reasonable to provide that half-past 12 should be the time after which Report of Supply should not be taken. I would point out that the Report of Supply is necessarily an Order of the Day, and the operation of this proposal will be confined to Mondays and Thursdays. If any kind of discussion is anticipated, it will only be necessary for an hon. Member to say "I object" when previous Orders are called on, and Report of Supply will then be reached at a reasonable time after 12. It is practically impossible that the Report of Supply can be postponed beyond a quarter-past 12. If Report be preceded by other Government Orders at the top of the Paper, the debate is interrupted at 12 o'clock, and hon. Members have only to say "I object" to the preceding Orders, and we reach Report, which comes next.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I should not think of objecting to these Bills in order to get to Report.

Mr. COURTNEY: Well, others would. Speaking from experience, every one knows how easy it is to rush through the Orders in order that the Report of Supply may begin early. With reference to the point of the hon. Member for the Scotland Division, no doubt if the First Lord of the Treasury receives a strong, or even a considerable representation, that the report of a particular Vote is likely to occupy a considerable time, he will make special arrangements, and then the object of the Amendment will be met.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have not the slightest hesitation in giving the assurance referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, and asked for by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool. I am only doing what has been the practice for many years past of all those who have held the position I now occupy. If there is any subject on which the House, or an important section of it, really feels that further debate is required, undoubtedly the leader of the House has always deemed it to be his duty to make provision accordingly, and I shall certainly do so.

Question put, and negatived.

Main Question put.

(4.50.) The House divided:—Ayes 194; Noes 102.—(Div. List, No. 48.)

Resolved, That the Reports of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed, and the proceedings thereon shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. 5.

*(5.3.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: In moving the other Motion which stands in my name, I may perhaps be allowed to say that although it is the case that considerable progress has been made in Supply, the number of Votes obtained does not exceed the number voted last year at the same date. The progress made has not been so considerable as hon. Members suppose. The Vote on Account this year has been obtained at the same time as was that of last year, and unless some further progress is made with Supply, the House will undoubtedly have reason to complain. Last year I asked the House for Tuesdays on the 10th of March, and for Fridays on the 30th of April.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That on and after Tuesday, April 22, unless the House otherwise order, the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at 2 of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to the morning sitting on those days."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

(5.5.) Mr. SEXTON: I noticed this morning in the *Times* newspaper, which has lately taken upon itself the function of director of the business of this House, the suggestion in a leading article that the proceedings on the Land Purchase Bill next week ought to be taken *de die in diem.* I understand that this Motion is made with the intention of providing Morning Sittings for the purpose of Supply. ["No, no!"] Then, I should desire some information as to what is intended to be done at the Morning Sittings. Do the Government intend to take Supply or the Land Purchase Bill on Tuesday and Friday mornings?

*(5.6.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: That question has not been considered by the Government. If the hon. Gentleman will ask a question on Thursday on the subject I shall be glad to reply.

(5.6.) MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I think that last year the Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays were asked for solely for Supply. If such Sittings are to be taken without reference to Supply, certainly I shall vote against that proposal. I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that Standing Orders become of very little avail if at a certain period in each year the Minister in charge suspends them for the benefit of the Government. You might as well have said in your Standing Orders that they were only intended to apply up to Easter, and we should have understood you. The position of private Members is getting absolutely ridiculous. There have been only four occasions in the present Session on which private Members have had any nights at all. If the business of Parliament is to be only Government business, let it be so understood; but do not let it be used against private Members that they are responsible for a destructive policy only, and that they never introduce constructive legislation, when the Government put it out of their power to do so. I claim for private Members that their position should not be made a sham, and if the Government compel us much more than we do to discuss their Votes the blame rests on them, because they deprive private Members of the opportunities which the practice and procedure of Parliament were intended to afford.

(5.10.) MR. J. E. ELLIS: I understood the object of this Motion, as defined by the First Lord of the Treasury, was that one Sitting should be taken for the purpose of Supply, but, from the right hon. Gentleman's answer to the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) it is evident that the Government have not yet made up their minds as to what they will do with the times they are about to take—that, indeed, they have not considered what they are going to do with the mornings they ask for. That the First Lord should come down to the House and ask for the time of private Members without giving the slightest reason why the request should be complied with is most extraordinary. I, as a private Member, protest against the intolerable uncertainty in which we find ourselves. In consequence of the uncertainty as to the state of business, private Members are unable to make any engagement or to answer any letter in respect to any future appointment. I am one of those who think there is a great waste of time in the House. I consider that time is wasted in other ways than by speaking. I think that when the First Lord of the Treasury moves a Vote of this kind by a simple nod of the head and without a word of reasonable explanation why he takes away the time of private Members, he conduces greatly to waste of time, and does not facilitate the progress of business. Then there is another fruitful source of waste of time, and that is, unwise persistence with business at unreasonable periods, and which the Government ought to know cannot pass. Several instances of this occurred last Session. The Tithes Bill was introduced on the 7th of June, and we all remember the confusion and chaos which prevailed in consequence, with the result that the House did not get up until the 30th August. The leader of the House, addressing his neighbours in Oxfordshire the other day, said that his title to hold his present position is owing to the fact that he is a man of business. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will so order the business of the House that the time of the House will not be wasted. I hope that private Members will not have their Friday nights interfered with, but that these will be secured to us for the discussion of questions of public importance. If the Motion before the House is carried I trust it will be taken as a pledge that the Government will do what it can to bring about a much earlier rising of the House than that which occurred last year.

*(5.18.) SIR R. FOWLER (London): Allow me to remind hon. Gentlemen opposite that it was always the practice of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to take Morning Sittings at this period of the year. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) will recollect that a great part of the Irish Church Bill, 20 years ago, was taken at Morning Sittings. I certainly think it is unreasonable on the part of hon. Gentlemen to object to the present proposal of the Government.

*(5.19.) Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Londonderry): We must press the First Lord of the Treasury for a distinct answer to the question put to him by my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast. How can we say whether we are inclined to give up two days of the week unless we know what use is to be made of them? It seems to me most extraordinary that the Government should ask for Tuesday and Friday mornings and not have made up their minds as to what business they will take on those occasions. We wish to discuss the Irish Land Purchase Bill fairly, and at reasonable length. We certainly do not want it to be cut up into shreds and patches—one patch snipped off at one Morning Sitting and another patch at another Morning Sitting. Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays are usually taken for the business of Supply, and what we now want is an assurance from the right hon. Gentleman that, except on the occasion of a real emergency, the Morning Sittings he asks for will be devoted to Supply, and to Supply alone. If the right hon. Gentleman will not give us such an assurance, I shall be bound to move, as an Amendment, to add after the words "two o'clock," the words "for the business of Supply."

*(5.22.) Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I suppose we private Members must give way on this occasion, but I should like to point out that if anybody are the sufferers it is the private Members sitting on this side of the House. Hon. Gentlemen opposite can and do talk as much as they please, but we, who wish to see the business of the House carried on, have not much chance of doing so. As we have to give up our mornings on Tuesdays and Fridays, I think we may fairly ask that the Government should feel it their duty to make a House when we re-assemble on Tuesdays and Fridays at 9 o'clock.

(5.23.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I think that the private Members will be the gainers rather than the losers by the adoption of the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for Derry says that Morning Sittings ought to be confined to Supply, but I do not understand the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman in that sense. In theory we have private Members' days on Tuesdays and Fridays, but in practice we have not. There are two important Bills before the House this Session—the Land Purchase Bill and the Tithes Bill. No sooner will those Bills get into Committee than the right hon. Gentleman will ask for facilities, and will take the whole of Tuesday as well as the whole of Friday, consequently private Members will be entirely shut out. If, however, we accept the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, he will not ask for further facilities, but will leave us in the enjoyment of the Tuesday and Friday evenings. [Mr. W. H. Smith signified dissent.] What, have I been deceived by the right hon. Gentleman? Have I been induced to support the right hon. Gentleman under a delusion? I imagined this was to be a settlement of the whole question. I thought that during the rest of the Session, except perhaps in the last two weeks, we were to have Tuesday and Friday evenings. If the right hon. Gentleman says that this is only one bite at the cherry, and that he will take the whole of the Tuesdays and Fridays if he wants them, I do not see how we can vote with him. There must be a bargain on both sides.

*(5.26.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division (Mr. J. E. Ellis) made a complaint as to the management of the business. I would be exceedingly glad if the hon. Member could give us any assistance in arranging the proceedings of the House so that the course of business may be forecast with reasonable certainty. I would also be exceedingly grateful if the hon. Member would render the Government that assistance which he appears to think may be rendered by some one, whereby the time of the House may be saved. No doubt, if the time of the House were arranged on strictly business principles, a good deal more work might be done, but there is an ancient privilege of Members of the House which no Member of the Government has either the power or the desire to interfere with, namely, the liberty of speech of hon. Members. So long as that liberty is indulged in with the freedom and want of responsibility shown by some Members, I am afraid no Member of the House in my position can lay down any rule or make any proposal to the House which will entirely obviate the loss of time and unbusinesslike results which occasionally follow. It is not the inten-

tion of the Government to proceed with the discussion of so important a measure as the Irish Land Purchase Bill in the patchwork fashion suggested by the hon. Member for Derry. In asking the House for Morning Sittings, the Government have before them the necessities of Supply. Last year and the year before, however, we declined to bind ourselves not to take any other business which it might be desirable to deal with, and we must take the same course now, although our principal object is to discuss Supply on the days we ask for. I should be only too glad if the House should consider the Bills before it in such a business like way as to make the *de die in diem* prosecution of any measure unnecessary, but if towards the end of the Session the same course should be followed as was pursued at an earlier period, when a debate in which no interest was taken was continued day after day, then the Government must ask for the facilities which were given last Session and have been given in the past. The object of the present Motion is in accordance with precedents Parliament has sanctioned, and the practice under it will be precisely similar to that adopted last Session.

(5.32.) MR. JOHN MORLEY: The right hon. Gentleman has, after all, given the House no reason why we should take this unprecedented course in a Session when the progress of business has been extraordinarily satisfactory. It really comes to this, as the hon. Member for Northampton has said, that we might just as well come to an understanding that the Standing Orders should apply only up to Easter, and that afterwards they should be abrogated. What the right hon. Gentleman has said as to the difficulty of making an exact division of business of course we all understand, but with business in the present advanced state that the right hon. Gentleman should make this extraordinary demand is a course against which I and those around me feel bound to protest in the strongest manner. I think we have a right to ask the right hon. Gentleman to make this one concession. He says he cannot assent to the proposal of the hon. Member for Derry that Supply only should be taken on Tuesdays and Fridays until the end of the Session, and, of course, we can understand why he should not agree to that; but the Government

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might meet the wish of the House—for I believe it is the wish of the greater part of the House—by consenting to make Supply the business on Tuesdays and Fridays until Whitsuntide. That, at all events, might be done, and would meet many objections. If you, contrary to precedent, take these Morning Sittings before Whitsuntide, I think, at least, you might give an undertaking that until Whitsuntide they shall be devoted to the business of Supply.

(5.37.) MR. G. A. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Penryn and Falmouth): I am sorry to trouble the House, but my right hon. Friend has not answered the appeal of my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington as to the Government making a House on Friday evenings. It is a question that has been before the right hon. Gentleman before. As my right hon. Friend knows, when Lord Palmerston was leader of this House, from the time he entered it at 4 o'clock he seldom left it until the House rose. Lord Beaconsfield, too, was in constant attendance and rarely went home to dinner. Now, 9 o'clock, as has been pointed out, is an extremely difficult time for Members to return, but not more so for Members of the Government. The Government have not more to do now than in times past, and they have more accommodation provided within these walls than previous Governments have had, and it is not too much to ask that they shall be in their places at 9 o'clock. It is upon record that predecessors of the right hon. Gentleman have admitted the moral obligation of Members of the Government to make a House at 9 o'clock, especially on Fridays. The Members of the Government, I believe, muster about 30, and I do not think that it is unreasonable to ask that some 15 or 20 of these should consider that to assist in making a House is part of their duty. They receive considerable salaries, and it is no great addition to their duties to sit on that Bench at 9 o'clock on Friday evenings. I hope the First Lord will favourably consider this suggestion. He must remember the opinion of his old leader, and how vexed the late Lord Beaconsfield used to be whenever the House was counted. I have myself received, and so no doubt has the right hon. Gentleman, reminders that it was necessary I should be in my place. No statesman ever sat in this House who more desired to respect the rights of private Members than the late Lord Beaconsfield, and I hope that spirit may still continue to animate his successors in the leadership of the House.

*(5.40.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: If I may be allowed to make a reply it must be to the effect that, so far as we can, we will assist in making a House on Friday. As for the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, we will do our best to secure a House for him, and I can say no more than that. But I do not know that if any private Member is unable to secure a quorum for the consideration of a Motion he desires to submit, it is the duty of the Government to make and keep a House. I would remind the House that twice during the Session the House has been counted out on Tuesdays, and we are really asking for time therefore that private Members do not greatly require. I am sorry that I am not able to give the undertaking asked for by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle. We may have to ask the House to provide from day to day for the ordinary Government business taken on Mondays and Thursdays. We shall proceed as in previous Sessions, and of this I do not think the House can complain, that, unless the House shall otherwise order, we shall sit at 2 o'clock on Tuesdays and Fridays, and we propose this to facilitate the progress of Supply. The House has the power to otherwise order, if it sees fit, in reference to any special measure. I wish again to say that we reserve to ourselves the right we have exercised in the past of dealing with financial business, and of dealing with any measures of urgency on Tuesdays and Fridays, in fact to forward the business of the Government in any way.

Mr. SEXTON: Have the Government so far made up their minds as to say whether Supply will be taken on Tuesday and Friday next week, and the Land Purchase Bill on Monday and Thursday?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I cannot make any engagement just now.

(5.43.) Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): In consequence of the extremely unsatisfactory reply in reference to proceeding with important Irish business, I think it becomes necessary to move an Amendment to the Motion by adding after the words "two o'clock" the words "for the business of Supply." The right hon. Gentleman must be aware that it is a very serious inconvenience to Irish Members not to know what is intended to be done in regard to the Land Purchase Bill. The right hon. Gentleman will not give my hon. Friend the information he desires; but, I think, in view of the importance of the matter to us, the right hon. Gentleman might stretch a point and decide now. In view of the attitude taken up by the right hon. Gentleman I must insist on the Amendment if we have nothing definite as to the intention with regard to the Land Purchase Bill.

Amendment proposed, after the word "clock," to insert the words "for the business of Supply."—(*Mr. W. Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the words be there inserted."

*(5.45.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: I can only repeat what I said in answer to the hon. Member for Derry, that we shall not proceed with the Second Reading of the Land Purchase Bill at a Morning Sitting.

Mr. SEXTON: Then I take it as a definite pledge that the Bill will not be taken at a Morning Sitting?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Second Reading debate will not be proceeded with during a Morning Sitting.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Then the debate will begin on Monday, and be resumed again on Thursday next week?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I must reserve the right to move that the Land Purchase Bill shall take precedence of all other business, if it should be necessary to come to an arrangement of that kind.

Mr. SEXTON: At what stage, and how soon?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: That will be on Monday. I reserve the power to propose a Motion, if we think it necessary to do so; but I hope that the Government may come to some understanding with hon. Members as to the debate on the Land Bill, so as to render that unnecessary.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Well, it is not very plain. It is as yet uncertain whether the Second Reading debate will be taken next week or not.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: It must be so until we arrive at an understanding as to the termination of the debate. I hope we shall come to an understanding and make an arrangement that will be generally satisfactory.

(5.47.) MR. SEXTON: I must submit that the right hon. Gentleman does not treat us with that consideration and candour we have a right to expect. He was first asked to confine Supply to Morning Sittings, and he replied that it was not fair to require him to enter into a binding engagement. He was then asked to give an engagement for the time between now and Whitsuntide, and he refused to give an engagement to this limited extent. From his reply to my question we infer that he has not yet made up his mind as to proceeding day by day with the Land Purchase Bill. But the right hon. Gentleman, by various forms of language, endeavoured to convey that the operative motive of the Government in this Motion is to proceed with Supply. Well, if that is the object, why decline to give us an engagement that for next week Morning Sittings shall be used for Supply? Have some 80 Members of this House no right to be informed what day it is proposed to proceed with the Land Purchase Bill, to enable us to communicate with our Party as to attendance here to take part in a Division? Why, it is but the most ordinary view of the rights of Members that we should be informed now whether the debate opened on Monday is to be resumed on Thursday, or when. Only on such information can we make arrangements for attendance, and as a Party we may claim such facilities.

*(5.48.) MR. BARTLEY: I think we may claim to know something about the 22nd. I look at it from a private Member's point of view, having the first Motion on that day. It is reasonable we should know what is intended. I do not wish to do anything unfriendly to the Government, but I must press for a definite answer.

*(5.48.) MR. W. H. SMITH: If it is the desire of the House, I will say at once that the Morning Sitting next Tuesday shall be for Supply, but I trust by that time it may be possible to arrive at an understanding as to the course of the debate on the Land Purchase Bill.

(5.49.) MR. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I object very strongly to the Standing Orders being suspended in this fashion. The Rules are framed upon the principle that they shall apply to all ordinary circumstances; and no matter how often you make the exception when you take facilities for Government business, you proceed contrary to the principle and spirit of the Standing Orders, and on each occasion you do so especial reason is shown for it. Though there are precedents, still it is an exceptional thing to do, and not the slightest reason for it has been given in the present instance. Two important Bills only are mentioned or suggested as likely to be brought forward for our careful consideration. No hint is given of any other measure of importance being submitted to Parliament, and of these two one of them is of such an obnoxious and prejudicial a character that it is not unfair to call it a purely Party measure of a most objectionable character—I mean the Land Purchase Bill. I am confirmed in that conviction by the inarticulate interruptions from the other side. The other Bill deals with a matter of deep importance, upon which the Government last Session could not make up their minds, and their proposals met with such little favour that, on your ruling, Sir, they were forced to withdraw the malformation into which the Bill had grown. With these two Bills before us we are called upon to grant special facilities for Supply. I earnestly hope that the House will divide against the Motion, unless we are assured that the House will rise the earlier because of it. What is the object of the Motion? Are there some other Bills to be introduced at the last moment, as was the case last year—little surprises of an objectionable character, of which we knew nothing until three weeks or a month before the time when the House was expected to rise? If there is nothing of this sort intended why begin so unprecedentedly early in the Session to obtain extra facilities for Supply? We are establishing a precedent which, year by year, will be improved upon.

(5.51.) MR. W. REDMOND: A pledge having been reluctantly given that next week the Land Bill shall not be taken on Tuesday, I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put.

(5.52.) The House divided:—Ayes 191; Noes 109.—(Div. List, No. 49.)

Resolved, That on and after Tuesday, 22nd April, unless the House otherwise order, the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at Two of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to the Morning Sitting on those days.

METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Bill to amend the seventy-eighth section of "The Metropolis Management Amendment Act, 1862," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Mr. Octavius V. Morgan, and Mr. Beaufoy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 243.]

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT (1889) AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hozier, Bill to amend, as far as Scotland is concerned, "The Prevention of Cruelty to and Protection of Children Act, 1889," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hozier, Mr. Baird, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Leng, Mr. Charles Parker, and Mr. James Smith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 224.]

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHISTS.

*(6.7.) **Earl COMPTON** (York, W.R., Barnsley): I do not think I need make any excuse for bringing forward what I consider to be the just grievances under which telegraphists are suffering at the present moment. I have no political or Party object in bringing forward the Motion with which I intend to conclude my speech, and I, therefore, hope the Government will allow the vote to be taken as a non-Party one. The grievances have been of long standing, not only in the central office, but in the provinces, and they extend also to Scotland and Ireland. Both males and females complain bitterly of the conditions under which they perform their work. That work has increased enormously since the introduction of the Fawcett scheme in 1881, and as the work has increased the grievances have increased also. At the end of last Session I gave notice of my intention to bring this matter forward, and, therefore, it cannot be said that I have taken the Postmaster General by surprise; he must, indeed, have expected some such course as this would be taken after the numerous questions which have been addressed to him, and the avalanche of petitions forwarded to him, both from the central offices and from provincial telegraphists. The answers of the Postmaster General to questions on the subject have either been a decided negative or else the right hon. Gentleman has stated that the matters complained of are under consideration. How many years they are to remain under consideration I know not, but perhaps the result of this Motion may be to expedite their consideration. I am afraid I must say at once that the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman has been rather that of an unsympathetic *non possumus* to all questions which were asked. I myself have been one of the victims who have been unable to get any very direct replies to the questions I have put. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman has been cramped by what is called officialism. In that case, if the present Motion is passed the right hon. Gentleman's hands will be strengthened, and he will be able to redress the grievances which have been brought under his attention. Those grievances may be summarised under four heads—(1) the hours of duty; (2) the question of pay and salaries; (3) the question of classification and promotion; (4) the very burning question of meal-times. As regards the hours of labour, it seems to me that this is a difficult matter to be dealt with by anyone who does not possess an intimate acquaintance with what is going on in the offices. There is a complicated system of regular and irregular work, and of overtime; and the principle upon which this is carried out seems to be that of extracting the largest possible amount of work out of each individual at the least possible cost to the country. I should like first to allude to the Fawcett scheme of 1881 in regard to the hours of labour. It was laid down in that scheme that, as a rule, there should be 16 hours' work for two days' work, and that was to be divided so as not to give more than 11 hours on any particular day. I contend that that scheme has not been adhered to. There have been weeks, particularly in the central office, when the hours of work have been 10 daily. That means 20 hours in two days, instead of 16 hours, under the Fawcett scheme. It is, no doubt, said that this has been compensated in the succeeding week, when there have been only 36 hours of work, or six hours a day. I maintain, however, that is no compensation. This irregularity of hours is a great hardship to those who are working in the telegraph office. It does not appear to me to be a difficult matter

to reorganise the office so that the work should be more regular. As regards overtime, I find that during the summer of 1889, for certainly a fortnight, the telegraphists were worked something like 196 hours. That made 98 hours during a working week, including regular hours and overtime. I contend that those hours are too long for any public servant, and considering that the question of the hours of labour is coming prominently before this country, and other countries, I think it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government to set a good example to other employers, and to say that by them, at all events, long hours of labour will not be tolerated. I am told that a clerk has been mildly censured for having worked 14 hours in one day, but working too long hours is the fault of the employer and not of the employed. It may be said that men are not compelled to work overtime. I am unable to admit that the overtime work is completely voluntary. Under the system which prevails a man who volunteers to work overtime can be kept at it until it is convenient for those in charge to release him. A man may volunteer for two or three hours' extra work, but once he volunteers he may have to work for many more hours than he wishes. The men are called upon for overtime at a moment's notice, and in 1888, during the summer, it was frequently the case that men were on continuous duty for 16 hours, with only half an hour for dinner. Last summer there were many cases of 14 hours' continuous duty, and one clerk was suspended for refusing to do overtime, though he pleaded ill-health as an excuse. Yet, in face of this, we are told that overtime is voluntary. I should like to know if it is true that clerks, after having done duty from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. have been compelled to come on duty again at 10 in the morning and work till eight in the evening; or, in all, 17 hours. Last year I asked the Postmaster General to state what is the greatest number of hours any individual clerk is called upon to work, and the right hon. Gentleman replied—

> "The number of hours in one day during which a telegraphist may be kept on duty is governed by the exigencies of the Service."

This debate will give the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of qualifying that answer. As long as I have the honour of sitting in this House I intend to be studiously moderate in my language, but I confess that strong language rises to my lips when I receive such an answer as that. We take great care that animals are not driven to death, and that men who do such things shall be prosecuted and punished. It is not a question of the exigencies of the Public Service how long our servants shall work, and I, therefore, hope the Postmaster General will either withdraw or modify that statement. As to annual leave, the telegraphists are asking for one calendar month's leave for those who have served 10 years, and three weeks' leave for those who have served less than 10 years. This seems to me to be a very moderate demand, and I think it is in accordance with what Mr. Fawcett intended, for, in a letter to the Treasury, he said he was considering a scheme, the effect of which would be to give one month's leave to men who now had only three weeks, and three weeks to those who had only a fortnight. That shows the spirit in which Mr. Fawcett approached the matter, and I hope that this grievance will be speedily redressed. It ought to be remembered that the telegraphists have no Bank holidays, and work on Sunday. For my own part, I wish that there was no Sunday labour; but admitting that it was necessary for a certain number of telegrams to be sent on Sunday, Sunday labour should be limited as far as possible, and should be paid as full overtime. I find that in the provinces, prior to the Fawcett scheme, the clerks had to do eight hours' work, without extra pay, every fifth Sunday; now they have to do it every fourth Sunday. Now, I come to the question of salaries. The highest officials are, of course, well paid, and deserve to be, for they do hard duty. Since 1880 the pay of superintendents has risen from £300 to £400, while the pay of assistant superintendents has risen from £210 to £300. I am told that a new scheme, last was night, posted at the Liverpool office which will give increased salaries, but I know nothing of the details. Before 1881 the maximum pay of the senior clerks was £160 a year; now it is only £190, a rise quite disproportionate to that of the assistant superintendents, who are next above the senior clerks. Moreover, senior clerks are in many cases doing the work of assistant superintendents. I hold that in such cases the clerks should receive promotion and a higher salary. In a Circular issued by the Post Office to attract youths into the Telegraph Service the prospect of rising to a salary of £190 per annum is offered. But if a block in promotion takes place, as is frequently the case, the clerks have no hope of attaining the £190. The telegraphists ask that all overtime should be paid for equally on the basis of the rate and a quarter, and they object to the deduction from pay during absence on sick leave. Then I come to the question of pensions. At present, before a clerk is eligible for a pension, every day he is absent through sickness is deducted, although his salary has been reduced by that absence; while nothing is said about the overtime he may have worked. Again, there is the question of promotion. In the provinces the advance is very slow. Take, for instance, the Cork Branch. The maximum in the second class is £98 per annum, and it takes 15 years to arrive at that maximum, even if a man is lucky. At the present moment there are three clerks there who, although they have been over 18 years in the service, are waiting for promotion. During the last six years there have only been nine promotions into the first class, in which the maximum is 50s. a week; and there has only been one promotion since 1881. In the provinces, too, Sunday labour is unpaid for, while the London telegraphists are insufficiently paid for it. Then, again, although the work has increased, the different classes of clerks have not increased in the same ratio; and I contend that they ought to be enlarged to permit of speedier promotion to the maximum of £190 a year. As it is, some clerks may secure their promotion in seven or eight years, while others may have to wait for 18 years, though all have equal qualifications and length of service. I hope that something will be promised in connection with this matter of classification. And now I come to the question of meal-times. This may appear to be a small matter, but it is a matter of vital importance, because it affects the health of those whom we employ. There is at present no cessation of work for meals during the turns between 2 p.m. and 10 p.m., 3 p.m. and 11 p.m., 5 p.m. and 2 a.m., and 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. Sometimes, of course, the clerks may have spare moments, but very often their work is continuous. I will refer to a letter sent to the Controller on this subject by a member of the Telegraphic Staff, in which the writer asked that, as he was on duty from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m., he might be allowed an interval for dinner. He said he had to leave home at 1 p.m., and, therefore, was compelled to have a meal at the latest by half past 12, and, with the exception of the two slices of bread and butter supplied by the Post Office between 5 and 6 p.m., and which had to be eaten while the operator was working—he had no opportunity of getting any food until he left the office. The answer to that was,—"I see no reason for departing from the general rule." I think it is time that these matters were laid before the House, in spite of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet opposite. Men have actually been punished, I am told, for having partaken of food during these hours. There was a case at the end of last year where two men who had two extra hours duty were punished for delaying their work by talking while taking their suppers. They denied the talking, but, even if they did talk while taking their food, there was not very much harm in it. Other clerks have been punished by transference to another staff, which, to many of them, is a punishment. I must also mention the case of the submarine telegraph clerks who lately waited on the Postmaster General. They have a just grievance, which, I believe, has been promised consideration. I find that there are certain vacancies in the Central Telegraph Office, and I should like to know whether estimates intended for clerks in the central office have been given to the Submarine Telegraph clerks. I imagine there must have been a mistake, because I do not believe the Postmaster General would do such a thing intentionally. I will not detain the House by going into further grievances; I have referred to the strongest of them. I may be told that the matter is still under consideration. I shall not consider that a satisfactory answer, and I shall certainly take a Division if that should be the only answer I receive. I may receive a distinct negative, which, of course, would necessitate a Division. I may be told that there are great difficulties as regards the financial question, and, having served many years in the Foreign Office, I know what those difficulties are, and how the Treasury insist on economy. I am quite well aware that it is not easy to obtain the assent of the Treasury to a proposal which involves an increase of expenditure. I was told, last year, by the Postmaster General that he had not consulted the Treasury.

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): On what subject?

*EARL COMPTON: On the subject of the increase of the salaries of the telegraph clerks. The Fawcett scheme of 1881, I find, was supposed to have cost the country something like £67,000 down, and £250,000 per year. I should like to know whether the improvements promised under the Fawcett scheme have been carried out. We contend not. Then we are told that there is an annual deficit. But that is owing to the high price paid for the telegraphs, and is not the fault of the telegraph clerks, who should not be overworked at inadequate salaries in order to make up that deficit. I consider that Mr. Scudamore's price was a great deal too high; and to tell the clerks that once the deficit is paid off then the question of salaries will be considered, is to say that the present generation of clerks are to receive small salaries, and be overworked, in order that a future generation of clerks may have larger salaries and less work. Then I am told that Civil servants have no business whatever to combine or agitate to get their grievances redressed. Sir, the ventilation of grievances is one of the most healthy things we can have. It is a safety valve, and if anybody tries to drive discontentment beneath the surface harm must inevitably ensue. There have been no underhand manœuvres. Petition after Petition has been properly signed and sent up in the last two or three years, and the subject has been discussed in the Press. But in a Treasury Letter, in answer to Mr. Fawcett, objection was taken to organised agitation being brought to bear upon the House of Commons. The Treasury Letter said—

> "My Lords reserve to themselves the power of directing that the execution of the terms of the agreement be suspended in any post office of which the members are henceforth known to be taking part in extra-official agitations."

I call that a monstrous doctrine, and it means that these men are to do nothing beyond simply appealing to the heads of their Departments, or, that if they go beyond, that they are to be punished. That is a paragraph which should be expunged as speedily as possible from the Letter of Her Majesty's Treasury. It appears to me that is pretty much the doctrine on which the Postmaster General acted with regard to Cardiff. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Cardiff is by ill-health prevented from being present, but it is his intention to bring the case of the Cardiff telegraph clerks before the House before the close of the Session. That case has been mentioned in the public Press; and though repeated representations were made by the Cardiff telegraph clerks, it was not until their case was taken up by the *Western Mail* that it received attention. A new Postmaster and staff were sent to Cardiff, and eight men were punished for this extra-official agitation. They were removed from Cardiff, which was a punishment to them, because the only reason given for their removal is that they took part in this agitation, which they deny. I hope we shall lay down at once the good rule that men may combine and agitate if they choose to do so in a legal way, whether they be Civil servants or not. I think I have laid before the House the facts. There is a stagnation of promotion and an inadequate scale of pay, and other grievances for which I ask a speedy remedy. The hardships are of a most harassing character, how harassing may be gathered from the detailed Superannuation Report, from which it appears that in 1885-6 50 per cent. of the clerks who retired did so from physical and nervous affections. Telegraph clerks undergo great bodily as well as mental fatigue. At an early age, in order to qualify them for higher positions, which in many cases are never open to them, they are expected to know something of electrical science and to be acquainted with the French and German languages, besides being good geographers, of which there are few nowadays. The duties of telegraph clerks are becoming harder. The Postmaster General knows that cipher and code telegrams are increasing enormously in number. If a word is sent wrong or a number omitted, it might mean ruin to the individual or disaster to a large number of the general public. How well the work is done I need not inform the House. Newspaper reports, commercial business, and many of the relations of life, depend upon the accurate and faithful work of the telegraph clerks, who are a deserving body of public servants. I leave with confidence this Motion in the hands of the House of Commons, who represent the public, whom it is the aim and object of every telegraph clerk to serve faithfully and well, and who only ask for justice to be done as regards their grievances. I have very great pleasure in moving the Resolution which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the present position of Telegraphists in London and elsewhere is unsatisfactory, and their just grievances require redress."—(*Earl Compton.*)

*(6.45). Baron F. de ROTHSCHILD (Aylesbury): My noble Friend who has moved this Resolution has entered so clearly and minutely into the subject that I will only trespass on the time of the House for a few moments in seconding his proposal. The Government might object to this Motion upon two grounds—the first being political, and the other financial. They might consider it inexpedient that private Members should lend themselves to agitation on the part of the Civil servants of the Crown, when this agitation is directed against the superior officials. I might compare this case with that of one of the great merchants in the City employing a considerable number of clerks. Supposing he were to underpay those clerks, they would naturally agitate for an increase of wages. In so doing they might come to some friend of theirs and ask him to lay their case before the merchant who employs them; but the merchant is in a very different position from that of a Minister of the Crown, because the clerks do the private work of the merchant, and it is to the interest of the merchant to see that that work is well carried out, and, consequently, that his clerks should be well paid for doing so. The Postmaster General may well say it is no business of ours to interfere between the Civil servants of the Crown and himself, but here I would venture to ask him whether those Civil servants are not quite as much our servants as they are those of the Postmaster General. The telegrams they have to send day and night are our telegrams, and is it, therefore, to our interest that the clerks who send them should be placed in such a position as will safeguard our interests. I might here cite an incident which, although at first sight may appear trivial, but is nevertheless to the point. It happened only the other day that a racing gentleman sent a telegram to Newmarket to ask a member of the ring to back a horse called Semolina, but instead of sending the name Semolina the telegraph clerks sent the name of another horse, Signorina, who did not win, and the consequence was that the gentleman who had thus been made to back it lost his money. There can be no doubt that if the telegraph clerks were to be better paid there will naturally be a demand for much more money, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to provide for in his Budget; but it seems to me that one of the chief sources of the national income is the money derived from the Inland Service, and inasmuch as there is a considerable increase in the Returns from the Telegraph Service it seems only right that a proportion of that increase should be given to those who are instrumental in producing it. When we are told that the telegraph clerks have no right to agitate, I would point out that this is no new agitation. In point of fact, it began something like 20 years ago, namely, in the year 1870, when it led to a strike which took place in the year 1872. That strike was only settled by an enormous expenditure. For my part, I hope that those difficulties will be adjusted without a strike on the part of the telegraph clerks, although at the present time it would appear that strikes are pretty much the order of the day. I would, therefore, put it to the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General that he should offer some positive assurance to my noble Friend that he will in due time, and after careful consideration, lay before the House some kind of scheme that will do substantial justice to the interests of all parties, and so obviate the existing difficulty. Without troubling the House any further, I have only to express a hope that we shall hear from the Postmaster General, not an evasive answer to the case we have put forward, but a reply that will prove satisfactory to all who take an interest in this question.

*(6.55.) MR. RAIKES: I cannot enter upon what I have to say without, in the first place, congratulating the noble Lord (Earl Compton) on the moderate tone of his speech and upon the scrupulous accuracy of his statements. If it were necessary that this Motion should have been made at all, I do not think it could have been brought before the House in a better way than that which the noble Lord had adopted; but, at the same time, I regret to have to say that, in my opinion, the time the noble Lord has selected for bringing forward this question has not been well chosen. A reformer is often told that he is either too early or too late in moving; but this Motion is both too early and too late. The noble Lord has been too early because he has brought forward this subject at a time when the Government have not had an opportunity of arriving at any conclusion with regard to the proposal it embodies, while he has raised a number of small points of detail which are at the present moment occupying the attention of the Department. The noble Lord has ranged the grievances of the telegraph clerks under four heads, namely, those which relate to the hours of duty, those relating to the rates of pay and allowances, those affecting classification and promotion, and those concerning the amount of leave. But I must complain that no official communication has been made to me with regard to the grievances of the London telegraph clerks before this Motion was brought forward in this House, a course which I think is altogether unprecedented. I can scarcely understand how the noble Lord opposite, who has evidently taken up this subject most conscientiously, could have reconciled it with his duty to have brought forward this Motion without having previously given the Department an opportunity of investigating the grievances which he alleges to exist.

*EARL COMPTON: I beg pardon. I certainly understood that a Petition had been presented from the London telegraph clerks to the Postmaster General on the subject. The Petition which I hold in my hand does not, however, appear to bear a date.

*MR. RAIKES: The only communication I have received from the London Central Telegraph Office was a request made to me three days ago, some weeks after the noble Lord gave notice of this Motion, that I should receive a deputation which would present a Memorial to me; in answer to which request I have directed a reply to be sent appointing a day in the course of next week, when I hope to receive that deputation and to hear what those who compose it have to say. I am, of course, aware that there has been a Petition flying about the country for some months past, which I have seen unofficially in the newspapers; but I may remark that the last persons to whom the grievances referred to in that Petition were made known were the official superiors of the Department. The first Petition on the subject that I have seen from the provincial offices was one from Newcastle, which was presented on February 28 in this year, and this was followed by a great number of other Petitions in identical terms from other offices. It was on March 4, four days after that Petition reached me, that I came to the conclusion that whilst it was not in my power to entertain or to recommend to the consideration of the Treasury several of the points that we raised by that document, yet that with regard to the other points I would take steps to secure their consideration by the immediate appointment of the best Departmental Committee I could select, upon which I would invite the representation of the Treasury with a view of considering the points put before me in order that I might see how far it is possible to go in meeting the grievances complained of. That Committee have now been sitting between a fortnight and three weeks, and they have not yet, of course, been able to deal with the intricate matters to be considered so as to enable them to arrive at any conclusion. But I am sure the noble Lord will agree that no time has been lost in the endeavour to probe to the utmost these grievances of which the telegraphists have complained. Now, there were nine points alleged in the Newcastle Petition, and in Petitions that have reached me since from other places; and upon four of these points I felt that I should not be acting fairly by the men if I allowed myself to hold out false hopes that it was at all likely these demands would be conceded. The first question upon which I felt it was impossible to encourage the Memorialists—was in regard to the request for the abolition of classification, and I think that the noble Lord, and those who think with him, are really hardly as careful as they should be in forming their conclusions if they encourage members of the Civil Service to think that what has been from the outset a cardinal principle of Civil Service, is likely to be modified in the case of telegraphists or any other particular branch of the Postal Service. I am assured by those most competent to form a judgment on the subject that the abolition of classification in the Telegraph Service would entail an addition to the expenditure of not less than £990,000 a year at the maximum—that is to say, an additional million—including changes that would have to be made in the Postal Service, for Members must see that we must place the two branches on the same footing as Mr. Fawcett placed them. There would be a claim for equality it would be impossible to disregard. If the position of the one branch is immensely improved, it will be impossible to refuse consideration of demands, though founded on very insufficient grounds from the other branch, which, up to the present time, has occupied its position with reasonable contentment, and has made no such claim. This demand is the largest, but there are others which I could not hold out any hope would be conceded. The second demand which cannot be entertained is the demand concerning the annual increment of the pay of junior officers. At present the increment is 1s. 6d. in the weekly wages, and the Petitioners are anxious that it should be raised to 2s. Those who support this demand need to be reminded that these telegraphists entered the service of the State on well-understood and recognised conditions. In their Petitions they gravely state that they are prevented from performing what they call "the duties of manhood," because their pay is so poor. What they mean is that they are not able to enter the state of matrimony eight or nine years before an ordinary member of the middle class would think of undertaking the burden of a family. Of course, I should be very glad if all these deserving men, excellent servants of the State, were receiving much larger incomes, just as I should be very glad if any hon. Member in this House were enjoying double his present income. But the Government must consider what are the terms on which these telegraphists entered the service of the State, and it is a little hard that after these people have entreated to be admitted to the Service, we should be told that those terms, after they have been freely accepted, are inadequate and insufficient—nay, almost savage and barbarous in their results. Those who take up this question are hardly treating the State fairly. It is easy to throw stones at the State, but the duties of the Government are not confined to the manifestation of pure benevolence towards individuals. There are five points as to which I have informed the Newcastle Petitioners that I shall be glad to obtain the best advice available, and see if anything can be done in regard to them. These five points do not include the burning "dinner" question, which arises in London only; but I shall be glad to consider whether I can include in the purview of the Departmental Committee any fresh point of that kind raised by the London Memorialists as soon as I shall have seen their Petition. It is impossible to pledge myself as to what points may be submitted to the Departmental Committee until I have the Memorial before me.

*Earl COMPTON: I cannot quite understand the right hon. Gentleman's reply on this matter. I am distinctly informed that the particular Petition to which reference has already been made, and many other Petitions, have been sent in the last three or four years to the right hon. Gentleman from the Central Telegraph Office. There was also a document setting forth the views of the senior male and female clerks of the first and second class in the Telegraph Department. I cannot believe that all these have escaped the right hon. Gentleman's notice.

*Mr. RAIKES: Of course, there have been previous Petitions in former years presented to myself and my predecessors in office. In fact, I may say that few months ever pass without the presentation of some Petition or Memorial from the Telegraph Staff. But I am referring now to *the* Memorial, which, I understand, is ready for presentation, which has not yet reached me, and which I only know of because I have been asked to receive a deputation, who propose to present the Memorial.

*Earl COMPTON: I did not allude to that. I referred to the Petitions showered upon the right hon. Gentleman himself and his predecessors as to these grievances. They all contain the same prayer.

*Mr. RAIKES: The noble Lord refers to previous Petitions, and I to a particular Petition. There is another point the noble Lord has alluded to just now to which I must call attention. A printed pamphlet, purporting to present the case of the senior and junior telegraphists in the Central Office, was said to have been brought to the notice of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service. Will it be believed that the first opportunity I have had of seeing that document was this very morning, when it reached me through the post? It was supposed in the Department that some statement was made to the Civil Service Commission, and we feel that we should like to have an opportunity of studying it. I have been unable before to obtain a copy of that Memorial, and I have not, of course, been able to give it any consideration. In fact, it has been sprung upon the Department at the last moment.

*Earl COMPTON: It is in the same spirit, and contains precisely the same points as have been raised in all the previous Petitions.

*Mr. RAIKES: The noble Lord referred to it just now as if I must have seen it, but I had not until this morning. It is likely that there would be a family resemblance between this and previous Memorials, for they all contain demands for more money and less work. The precise contents of the document, however, are not yet known to me. In the Report of the Royal Commission there is no indication of the contents of the pamphlet, and, as far as I know, there is no proof of the statement that the Royal Commissioners received it; they certainly have expressed no opinion upon it. It is part of the series of spring guns, man-traps, and sudden surprises which make this subject one so difficult to deal with. I will now tell the House what are the five points which I have referred to the Departmental Committee. The first is as to the sufficiency of present wages. The demand of the Petitioners is for a maximum of £200. I felt it right to inform the Memorialists that I could not hold out the hope of granting this, but I would consider how far the present rate is sufficient; the second is the request of the Petitioners that all overtime should be paid for at the rate of one and a quarter; the third is the demand that all Sunday work should be paid for as overtime; the fourth is the demand that sorting clerks and telegraphists of 10 years' or less service should receive three weeks' annual leave, and that those of more than 10 years' service should have one month; and the fifth is the request that full pay should be allowed during absence from duty through sickness. All these points are being sifted by the most competent tribunal I could appoint, and upon it I have a gentleman representing the Treasury. I think it extremely desirable, if possible, that I should be fortified with a unanimous Report of the Committee before requesting the Treasury to take any action. I had decided, before these questions were raised in the agitated form in which they have recently been presented to the public, that there were three principal requirements of the Service which merited special consideration. The most important of these concerns the position of the superior officers of the Telegraph Department. The noble Lord has referred to what he has heard from Liverpool this morning. Only a fortnight ago I obtained the sanction of the Treasury to a considerable improvement in the position of these officers at Liverpool. The consequence is that about 40 promotions have been made on the Telegraph Staff of that office. There are now one Chief Superintendent rising from £400 to £500 by increments of £20 a year; one Superintendent from £310 to £400 by £15 a year; four Assistant Superintendents of the first class rising from £260 to £310 by annual increments of £10; eight of the second class from £200 to £260 by annual increases of £10; one Assistant Female Supervisor rising from £80 to £105 by £5 a year. Liverpool is the largest and most important provincial office; but it is intended to take Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham, and other large towns in order. Careful inquiry will be instituted, not in any slap-dash fashion, or with a mania for uniformity, to ascertain the needs of the different offices; but Liverpool is as yet the only place where a change has been given effect to. I trust it will be seen that, although I have not been able to give any countenance to the proposal for the abolition of classification, which would in effect be the abolition of promotion by merit, I have not been slack in giving effect to the real requirements of the Service, and that in advance of the demands made upon me. I sympathise with the case brought forward by the noble Lord with regard to the hours of duty. But I am obliged, as the head of any Department would be, to consider first the exigencies of the Service. Reasonable care will, of course, be taken to prevent cases of hardship. It would be a scandal if the servants of the State were exposed to hardships which might easily be prevented. But, as everybody knows, the Telegraph Service is necessarily exposed to great fluctuations, in which occasional cases of hardship are inevitable. And I am sure that it will not be believed that the Department is indifferent to the hardships inflicted upon individuals. I can assure the noble Lord that everything shall be done which I can do to diminish any undue pressure. I regard the passage quoted from Mr. Fawcett's scheme as the recognised principle of the Department, that two days' work should not exceed 16 hours, and that no day should exceed 11 hours. The Secretary to the Treasury can bear witness to the importunity with which I have urged additions to the staff. But these questions are complicated by the considerations to which the noble Lord has very fairly referred, namely, that the men who are complaining of overwork are not extremely in favour of additions to the force, because it diminishes their opportunities of adding to their salaries by overtime. The noble Lord would be surprised if he knew how great has been the increase of the staff during the last few years. As regards the dinner hour in London, I do not see any great hardship if men whose hours are from 2 to 10 are requested to dine before they come on duty. They are allowed time for refreshment between 5 and 6, and it is enough if these men, who can hardly expect a life of luxury, are enabled to enjoy reasonable comfort. I admit the exceptional character of the Submarine staff, who have special claims on the consideration of the Department. They were handed over to the Government, which had but an imperfect knowledge of their position in their former employment. I have had the pleasure of meeting a deputation of these clerks, and have told them that though I cannot promise the large gratuities to their widows which the companies granted, yet I hope to improve their position. Then the noble Lord referred to the Cardiff branch of the subject, and upon this I in no way wish to shirk discussion. The claims put forward on this point are, I think, about the most nonsensical with which I have become acquainted. But the hon. Member who has special charge of this part of the subject is not now in his place, and I think it would be unfair to him to attempt now to make a general statement on this branch, and for the moment I pass over it. The only other matter I need refer to is the Circular issued from the Treasury under the Government of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. The responsibility for that Circular rests with right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and the quotation which has been made from it to-night is the first I have ever heard of. Whilst I think that the language used in that Minute is of rather too uncompromising and peremptory a character, I cannot but think that it would be a bad thing for the Civil Service if its members were constantly to be bringing their grievances before Parliament. I believe that in the great Republic across the water, which we are always being called upon to imitate, every inhabitant of the district of Columbia is disfranchised. Although that would be a very drastic measure to apply in any other country in the world—and we must remember that Washington is only an official centre —it shows that American politicians recognise the danger which arises in cases like the present. I hope that after the statement which I have been able to make this evening the House will recognise the claim of every Government that it shall not interfere with matters of Departmental administration, except where it thinks fit to censure the Minister in charge. So long as a Minister occupies his position at the head of a Department he ought to be allowed to conduct it in his own way. I venture to hope that the House will leave questions of this sort in the hands of those who are directly and primarily responsible for them, in the belief that the grievances of the servants of any Department are not likely to lack careful consideration and, I believe, just and fair treatment.

(7.32.) SIR A. BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.): I will only detain the House a few moments while I explain the Amendment which I have placed on the Paper, namely—

> "That this House, while anxious that all public servants should receive fair and adequate remuneration, regrets the increasing tendency to invoke the direct interposition of Parliament between the Executive Government and the Civil Service"

That Amendment is fully justified by the speeches which have been delivered this evening, especially that of the noble Lord. The noble Lord, indeed, has assumed that I put my Amendment on the Paper in some spirit of hostility to the telegraphists. That is in no way the case. I yield neither to the noble Lord nor any other Member in my admiration for the general body of public servants, or my appreciation of their merits, and of the way in which they perform their duties. So much is that the case that I have taken on several occasions the course of inquiring carefully into a grievance, and bringing it before the notice of the legitimate authority; and whenever I have done that, I have generally succeeded in having the grievance redressed. My objection to the Motion lies in its enormous breadth. The noble Lord assumes that the present position of the telegraphists is unsatisfactory, and that their grievances are just and require redress. I should have sympathised most cordially with him if he had adduced any one distinct grievance, but, instead of that, when the noble Lord came to speak on the grievances, they ranged over every possible matter of duty, pay, classification, promotion, bread and butter, and matrimony. The object of my Amendment is to declare that the House is not competent to deal with so many subjects at once; and we have now heard it fully explained by the Postmaster General how not only should we have been wrong in dealing with those subjects, but that, after spending last night in every kind of cheeseparing over the Estimates, we should now be voting away £1,000,000 of public money if we supported the noble Lord. The answer of the Postmaster General seems so satisfactory that I can hardly doubt that the noble Lord will withdraw his Motion. For my own part, any sentimental difficulty in opposing the Motion has been entirely obviated by the clear and masterly statement of the Postmaster General, and I shall, therefore, instead of moving my Amendment, support the Government in giving a direct negative to the noble Lord's Motion.

*(7.36.) MR. PRITCHARD MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvil): In the absence of the hon. Member for Cardiff I conceive it to be my duty to call attention to what took place in Cardiff last August. Certain telegraphists complained of the length of hours they had to work, and went on to state some of their grievances, and the consequence was that six new postal clerks and eight ordinary clerks, together with a Postmaster, were added to the staff. A letter was written to the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General, complaining that the clerks had been punished for simply complaining that they had not been paid for overtime, and the right hon. Gentleman admitted that they had been so punished by removal to other places. Public attention was first called to the matter in the *Western Mail*, which was a strong supporter of the Government. The excitement in the matter had been intense, and the Mayor and other influential people had taken great interest in the question, feeling that the clerks had been very badly used. I hold in my hand a telegram asking me to call the attention of the House to the moderate requests of the hard workers in the Cardiff office. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that while they were on sick leave, under the certificate of a Government doctor, one-third, at least, of their pay was deducted. These men, too, have to work eight or 10 hours without any chance of getting food, which is a far worse position than that of a sailor, soldier, miner, or even a prisoner in his cell. I think arrangements might be made by which some of the grievances might be remedied.

SIR L. PLAYFAIR (Leeds, South): I only intend to say a few words. I am extremely glad to have heard the fair speech of the Postmaster General and the concessions which he has promised. The officers for whom the appeal has been made are, as we all know, a body of most efficient and meritorious men, who have always done their work with great zeal for the Public Service. There is a great difficulty in ascertaining whether the rates of pay in such offices, where special knowledge is required, really represent a fair remuneration, and, therefore, it is very necessary that whenever there are grievances they should be well formulated in order that the Department may inquire fully how far they are just or unjust. The Postmaster General has told us that he has already appointed a Departmental Committee to inquire into the alleged grievances, and I think my hon. Friend would be well advised if he takes this concession in the spirit in which it has been offered and to accept the inquiry which I am sure, with my knowledge of Departmental inquiries, will be fair and just to the Telegraph Service, and if he does not press this Motion to a Division until, at least, he finds what is the result of the inquiry.

(7.45.) Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh): I only desire to say that the dissatisfaction which exists amongst the telegraph clerks of this country is very considerably shared by the telegraph operators throughout Ireland. I have received communications from telegraph operators in many parts of Ireland, expressing the hope that Irish Members will co-operate with the noble Lord in his endeavour to obtain the redress of their grievances, and I am convinced that if the noble Lord goes to a Division he will be followed by the majority of the Irish Members. It seems to me that the demands of the telegraph operators are perfectly reasonable, and that the statement of the Postmaster General is anything but satisfactory. Indeed, the right hon. Gentleman appeared to me to assume a tone of antagonism all through his speech to the complaints of the telegraphists. Irish Members have no desire that any but real grievances should be put forward, and some of the grievances enumerated by the noble Lord are undoubted. For instance, it must be impossible for the Postmaster General to explain how it is right and proper that the telegraph clerk in London receives pay for operating on Sunday, while the telegraph operator in Ireland receives no pay for Sunday labour. I will not go into other matters, but simply add that many people in Ireland are completely at one with the noble Lord, and that I hope he will go to a Division.

(7.47.) Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I sincerely trust the noble Lord will go to a Division. Several Irish Members have come from Ireland specially to support the noble Lord in the Division Lobby. I have come here now, at considerable inconvenience, to support the just claims of the telegraphists. Nowhere can you find a more efficient class of men than the telegraph operators in Cork. Sunday after Sunday these men are kept at work in consequence of the nefarious administration of Her Majesty's Government. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes, I say there is infamous misgovernment in Ireland; and the major portion of the messages sent across the wires in Ireland on Sunday relate to the suppression of public meeting in Ireland, and to everything that is antagonistic to the popular opinion of the country. We think that when these men are doing Her Majesty's work they should be paid. It is disgraceful the way these men are treated, and I want some definite assurance from the Postmaster General that their grievances will be redressed unless this is given; and if the noble Lord withdraws his Motion I hope some of our friends on the Opposition side of the House will, at any rate, put Her Majesty's Government to the trouble of a Division.

(7.50.) The House divided:—Ayes 103; Noes 142.—(Div, List, No. 50.)

FIARS COURTS IN SCOTLAND.

(8.3.) Mr. M. J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to move—

> "That it is desirable that the constitution and proceedings of Fiars Courts in Scotland should be reformed so as to obtain a better and more uniform system of striking corn and other averages than at present prevails; and that other agricultural produce should be included in the prices struck by the Fiars juries, especially meat and dairy produce, with a view to annually collect and publish the same in an efficient form."

It is of great importance that there should be a just, intelligible, and fixed procedure for ascertaining the money to be paid by commutation. The modes of striking fiars are different, inconsistent, and contradictory, and their process is loose, inefficient, and incorrect. I may explain to the House that under the old Act of Parliament fiars were struck on nine articles, namely, wheat, barley, bere, oats, peas, beans, rye, oatmeal, and malt. Some of these are obsolete, and I should like to substitute for bere and rye, for instance, meat, cheese, wool, and potatoes. Let me very briefly put the House in possession of the origin of this question, because there can be no doubt that many hon. Members are unacquainted with either the origin or the practice of fiars. The word "fiars" is derived from the French word *feurs*. The old definition of striking the fiars is—

> "The ascertaining and fixing by judicial authority the average prices of the different kinds of grain in each county, of a specific crop and year, and the prices thus held to be legally ascertained and determined become the rule and rate of payment in all transactions where money is substituted for grain at fiars prices."

It was deemed important several hundred years ago to ascertain in a legal manner the value of victuals, rents, and feu duties, payable to the Crown. At one time the value was ascertainable by the Sheriff of the Court of Exchequer, and at another period—in Reformation times—it was ascertainable in the Commissary and Consistorial Courts. One old statute bearing on the subject was one relating to the stipend of the clergy. It was passed in 1584. But there was even a statute passed in 1564. In those early days no jury had to be summoned, but the Sheriff was the sole arbiter on the evidence given by the witnesses, and many are inclined to resort to that tribunal at the present day. The Act of Sederunt, which regulated the procedure of Fiars Courts, was passed in 1723. Some may object to that Act as not being a regular Act of Parliament. Mr. Erskine says of such Acts that they

> "Are not law in the strict sense of the word, because they are not created by the supreme power, but the obligatory force is as strong as if they had the express sanction of Parliament."

Under the Act of Sederunt 15 men serve on the jury, by whom the prices are struck. Eight of these are heritors or proprietors, and they have to meet between the 4th and the 20th of February. One objection to this system is that the time of year at which the prices are taken is most inopportune, because between the 1st of November and the 20th of February it is difficult to say that any good grain will find its way into the market. In that period farmers only rush bad grain, or grain that will not keep well, into the market. Then, again, it is very near Candlemas rent time, and that operates in the getting rid of the grain which the farmer may be compelled to sell in order to pay his rent. In that way, therefore, the clergy, who depend on this system for their stipends, get the worst average. The evil might be avoided by the period being made as late as April or May, and then the greater part of the grain will be sold, and in consequence a fairer average taken. I may say, in passing, that the two parties whose interests are most at stake in this matter are, first of all, the tenant farmer, and next the clergy. The system operates very harshly on the stipends of parish ministers. It is impossible that they can feel satisfied, because in many counties only one fiar is struck, and they are entitled by the 48th of George III. to have the stipend paid on the highest fiar. When only one fiar is struck in the county it is impossible to say that that is the highest average of the price of corn in the county. Again, in some counties it is practically impossible to get together as many as eight heritors to form a jury. Many proprietors at that period of the year have left their Northern homes and come South. It would be better, in my opinion, to have a new arrangement respecting the jury, and one which would not give the proprietors an overwhelming majority on the jury. There is a great grievance felt as to the mode in which witnesses are summoned. They are brought from all parts of the country, and very often have very little to say. They stand about, practically, all the day idle. The producer gives an account of the grain on his farm. The dealer is called, and his evidence is welcomed because he can speak of many transactions, and very often gives his views of the same class of grain as the producer has just given evidence of.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at a quarter after Eight o'clock till To-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 16th April, 1890.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—(No. 6.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): Before I proceed with my argument in favour of the Second Reading of this Bill, I should like to say how unworthy I feel to occupy this position in the presence of hon. Members who have taken up the question for years past, and how I feel my inability to do it justice. It is identically the same Bill as the measure which has been introduced on three occasions, in 1887 by the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxfordshire (Sir B. Samuelson), in 1888 by the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth), and in 1889 by the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson). I think I may say that I speak for the textile manufacturers at all events, and for manufacturers generally throughout England. The Chambers of Commerce have unanimously petitioned the House in favour of the measure, and Resolutions in its favour have also been passed at the Trades Union Congress. I believe I shall be able to show the House that it is a Bill which affects not merely the employers of labour, but the industrial classes throughout the country generally. The grievance complained of is that gradually—owing to successive legal decisions—the interpretation of the Rating Law has been considerably altered, with the result that one by one owners and users of machinery have been attacked all over the country by the Rating Authorities, until in self-defence they feel themselves obliged to appeal to Parliament for redress. In Scotland the same attack has been made, but effectually resisted, and no machinery in Scotland has ever been rated, or is now attempted to be rated. I think, therefore, that I shall have the solid support on this occasion of the Scotch Members in passing this Declaratory Bill, which only proposes to leave the law in England precisely on all fours with what it is at present, and has always been, in Scotland. I might rest our demand solely upon the Report of the Committee of this House which sat in 1887, but I am afraid that it is my duty to go a little more into detail. I am quite aware that the leading lawyers have been arguing the question before the Courts for many years, but I would ask the House not to attach too much weight to the views they have taken in regard to the interpretation of the law, but rather, as the House of Commons is above all the Courts, to put the law on such a footing that in future the Judges will be able to interpret it in accordance with the common sense of the community. First of all, let me ask what is the Rating Law under which local rates are levied in this country? They are levied under the 43rd Elizabeth, c. 2, which directs the overseers "to collect rates from land, houses, and coal mines." That is one reason why it is proposed coal mines should be exempted from the operation of the present Bill, namely, that they are the one industry specially included in the first Act dealing with the question. Other Acts were, 13 and 14 Charles II., c. 12, "An Act for the Better relief of the Poor," the 6th and 7th William IV., c. 96, known as the Parochial Assessment Act, and by which "rent" was made the test of rateable value. Since then we have had a Declaratory Act, 3 & 4 Victoria, c. 89, renewed annually since 1840, by which—

> "Overseers have been prohibited from taxing any inhabitants of the township or parish in respect of any profits arising from stock-in-trade or other property."

This Declaratory Act states in the Preamble that it is an Act to exempt from liability to be rated, to the relief of the poor, stock-in-trade and other property, and it further instructs the Overseers

> "That it shall not be lawful for them to rate people upon such stock-in-trade and profits in future."

This is the Rating Law—and upon that Rating Law the rating has been conducted since 1840, and the owners of machinery have till recent years been able to watch with comparative indifference attempts made to widen the area of rating. It was not until recent years that any encouragement was given to Rating Authorities to rate the machinery and appliances of ordinary manufactures. This brings me to the story of the decisions of the Courts. The first and second cases quoted before the Committee were, prior to the Act of 1840, passed in consequence of these and similar attempts to rate personalty. It was in 1769 a question of rating a room containing cotton machinery driven by a small water wheel, the whole premises being rented for 36 guineas a year, came before the Courts, when the Judges ruled that there was attachment to the hereditament, and the whole, being one entire rent, was rateable. The second case occurred in 1836—*in re* Guest—in regard to iron machinery used in iron works, when the decision was,—

> "That all real property must be rated according to its actual value, combined with the machinery attached to it."

Four years later the declaratory Act, 3 & 4 Victoria, was passed. In 1849, in the case of the Southampton Dock Company, Lord Campbell based his decision entirely upon the question of attachment.

> "This is a rate upon the buildings to which these machines are attached," &c.

In the case of the North Staffordshire Railway in 1860, a step appears to have been taken in the direction of straining the law a little further, and it was decided that certain things should be regarded as irremovable—articles attached to the freehold were clearly rateable—and such things as turntables and weighing-machines standing on foundations specially built for them. The decision in this case was—

> "Where things, though capable of being removed, are yet so far attached that they were intended to remain permanently connected with the purposes of the undertaking,"

should be taken to be things liable to increase the rateable value of the property. So far it will be seen that attachment was the point which governed all these rulings. The hon. and learned Member for Staffordshire (Mr. S. Hill), in his evidence before the Select Committee, admitted that up to 1860 attachment was the test; and that in the case of "Walmsley *v.* Milne," haycutters, corn-cutters, and grindstones, the two first were held to be rateable, but the latter was not. After that year (said the hon. Member) a series of cases arose connected with different articles—as, for instance, the looms of a mill, which were discussed in a technical way, and Baron Parke held, in "Hallewell *v.* Eastwood," that—

> "Before machines became attached they were mere chattels."

That is the principle of the present Bill. From 1849 to 1886 the question of attachment was looked upon as the ratio of rateable value, and then the Courts (said the hon. and learned Member for Staffordshire) began to return to less technical rules. I altogether disagree with the hon. Gentleman, and my contention is that by all these earlier decisions it is only anything that is part of the mill and attached to it that could be rated; and in a case heard in 1866 before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, Mr. Justice Lush, and Mr. Justice Blackburn, it was laid down

> "That whenever a thing became so far a part of the premises that it would pass by demise, it was capable of being rated."

In this case of a gas works, the retorts, steam engines, and gas purifiers were instanced,

> "Because, without them, the premises would be worthless for the purposes for which they were erected."

I come now to 1878, when it was that the first decision was given which seriously alarmed manufacturers. Up to the shipbuilding case "Lang *v.* Bishop Wearmouth," and the case of the Tyne Boiler Company, there had been no such attempt to attach the tools and the machines of manufacturers; and it was in the Bishop Wearmouth case that Lord Cockburn for the first time introduced a new principle. He said that certain machinery was essentially necessary for shipbuilding premises, and must be taken as intended to remain permanently attached to them as

> "Long as the premises were applied to shipbuilding purposes."

These were new and most dangerous words. No one would dream of the retorts and purifiers of a gas works changing hands with the premises—

the retorts and purifiers are the gas works, but it is quite different in the case of shipbuilding works. In the latter case all the personalty might be sold off, and the yard and sheds let to another tenant, who might introduce entirely different machinery of a more modern character, or more suitable to the tenant's means and trade. In 1885 the decision in the Tyne Boiler case was given, and it has been productive of infinite trouble and annoyance to manufacturers generally, as well as having been a great source of profit to the legal profession. The words of the Judges in the case differ slightly, but none of them vary very much. The Master of the Rolls, Lord Esher, whose judgment has been so often quoted, held that things which were on the premises were liable to be rated when they were there for the purpose of making, and did make, the premises fit to carry on a particular trade. If this be so, what becomes of our old friends annexation, attachment, or adaptability? All these requirements are gone, and the pure naked thing remains that, wherever machinery is on premises, and makes the premises fit for the purposes for which they are being used, it is liable to be rated! If this principle holds good, why not rate the books in a barrister's chambers because they are on premises for the purpose of being used for the business of a barrister. The hon. Member for Staffordshire demurred to that view, because he said that the business of a barrister could be carried on anywhere; but I should like to know, if he took his books to chambers in Whitechapel, how many clients would follow him? There is not a single trade or profession —even a bootmaker's or a barber's shop —which this decision of Lord Esher would not sweep into the rating net! The declaratory Act of 1840 says that no personalty shall be rated, and no one will doubt that machinery is personalty. Certainly the manufacturers object to have their personalty rated unless you are going to rate personalty everywhere. Lord Justice Lindley, one of the Judges who tried the Tyne Boiler case, gave a Judgment less sweeping than that of Lord Esher, and his remarks show that there was some difference of opinion upon the point. He said—

> "That nothing was included in the nature of machinery which would be mere loose machinery and which would not pass to a tenant to whom the works were demised."

That is the same point we lay down in this Bill, but the Judgment quoted is always that of Lord Esher and not of Lord Justice Lindley. Our Bill leaves it perfectly clear that everything in the mill, for the purpose of making it a mill, as distinguished from a warehouse, is rateable; but that everything put in by the tenant or occupier for the purpose of carrying on a particular trade is not rateable. In his evidence before the Select Committee the hon. Member for Staffordshire said—

> "He did not apprehend from the decision in the Tyne Boiler case that any movable machinery could be rated;"

but Mr. Myers, of Preston (Questions 575 to 578), and Mr. Marshall (726), two experienced valuers for rating purposes, took an entirely different view, holding that under the Tyne Boiler decision all machinery could be rated. Mr. Marshall added (730) that to act upon this decision would "more than double" the rating of mills. The hon. Member for Staffordshire, before the Select Committee, said—

> "That it was necessary to look to the mode in which machinery was annexed." (Question 67.)

If the machines were not annexed, and were without a special foundation, then they were merely chattels and were not rateable. But that is the principle of our Bill. The hon. Member went on to say that if machines were there for the carrying on of the works, they must be regarded as part of the realty, and as such were liable to be rated. Of course. all machinery, all appliances, and all tools would be on premises for the carrying on of the works, for what other purpose could it be there? The hon. Member was asked whether, apart altogether from the question, whether the machinery was attached to the building it would not be rateable simply because it formed part of the essential means of carrying on a particular business, and his answer was—

> "I think not; the machinery must be connected with the building, and specially adapted to the business carried on in it."

In question 113, he was asked—

> "I think we may take it to be your opinion that there should be some adaptation of the premises as an essential element in the matter?"

And the answer was, "Certainly." He went on to say—

> "Both conditions are necessary and must co-exist."

In reply to the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester, he said (I refer to Questions 75, 76, and 77)

> "The new spinning mules were put in the mill for the purpose of the works being carried on in the way they were being carried on;"

and yet he declares, in Answer 79, that they should not be rateable! The opinion of the hon. and learned Gentleman at that time was that the two conditions I have referred to should be co-existent, and in reply to 296 he declares that one without the other is not enough. And if I can show him—as I can—that one of those two conditions has been entirely dropped, in a subsequent case, I claim the fulfilment of the promise he made before the Committee, namely, that if the Rating Authorities did act in that manner, he would re-consider his judgment as to the necessity of the Declaratory Act. I have alluded to annexation and adaptability of the premises to the machinery and the machinery to the premises. This has all been dropped, legal hair-splitting having brushed it all away. What I desire to bring out is the uncertainty of the law as it at present stands. How can business men make their arrangements with the law in this uncertain state? If at this moment I had to erect a mill giving employment to 500 or 600 hands, I should assuredly think twice or thrice before doing so in England. I should consider whether it would not be advisable to cross the border. The law in Scotland is clear and understandable. No machinery is rated there; and after the decision of Lord Fraser, I think no attempt will be made to rate it. Well, is such a state of things good for the English operatives or manufacturers? Across the Channel, in countries under the Code Napoléon, premises used for industrial pusposes are specially exempted from rating. The Bill does not propose this; it would be most unfair to do so; but what I want

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to point out is, that those great industries on which the well-being of the working classes of this country so much depend are far better circumstanced in Scotland and on the Continent than in England. I cannot help thinking that I have said enough, as regards the legal decisions, to show that the state of the law is irregular and uncertain, and requires alteration. I point out, further, as proving this irregularity in practice, that lace-making machinery is not rated at Nottingham, whilst it is rated at Chard, and that machinery is rated at Sheffield, Huddersfield, and Sunderland, which is entirely exempted at Kidderminster and three-fourths of Manchester. Before the Select Committee Mr. Dalgleish described the system of rating practised, and my own experience bears out his testimony. Machinery is not rated at anything like its value, but a compromise is effected. A rate is decided upon by the Rating Authority, and the manufacturer is threatened that if he does not pay, legal proceedings will be instituted. He pays his £300 or £400 extra rating rather fight, and the Assessment Committee is satisfied. Sometimes, if he is a strong man, he refuses to pay, and threatens in his turn to fight a battle in the Law Courts, and then he is often left alone. But, in the case of the small manufacturer, usually when he is threatened with an action he pays without further resistance. This witness says—

> "The appeals have been very few. There have been hundreds and hundreds of cases of appeal to the Assessment Committee, but those have only been friendly arrangements," &c.

Evidence was given before the Committee showing that machinery is often valued at such a low sum as will not justify the manufacturer in going to the cost and risk of an appeal. The Birmingham people are a law unto themselves. The Birmingham system is not to rate movable machinery, but to rate everything, fixed and movable, at 50s. per horse-power. That is a very rough-and-ready way of arriving at a result, but it is exceedingly unequal in its operation. A witness from Birmingham was asked before the Committee whether the machinery was rated on the nominal or the real horse-power, and he replied that the rating was on the nominal power, and that, as everyone knows, is, in modern engines, very different to the real horse-power, which may be double or more. The witness was asked why the Birmingham people started the idea of 50s. per horse-power, and he said it was on a Judgment of Lord Denman's in 1837. Their system really means that one manufacturer might have expensive delicate lace or jewellery machinery, and another manufacturer a brick-making machine, the former representing a value of £20,000, and the latter a value of £200, and yet both be rated on the horse-power! I come now to the latest case of all—the Chard case—being tried in the Appeal Court this day. In that case the Rating Authorities were represented by Mr. Balfour Browne, Q.C., who is well-known to many Members of this House. It was a particularly hard case. I have already said that Nottingham lace machinery is not rated at Nottingham. The people in this case had moved down into a country district from Nottingham. Everyone will agree that it is a great blessing for a country district to have employment for the women and children, and that the taking of a disused mill confers enormous benefit by giving the women and young people a chance of obtaining employment, and thus diminishing the general sum of pauperism. Mr. Castle was called in, and valued the building at £4,300, the fixed machinery at £1,500, and the lace machinery at £23,226, so that if the rating had been conducted in accordance with that valuation, the mill would have been rated at five times the value of the hereditament, or at £29,000 instead of £5,800. Mr. Balfour Browne, in opening the case, said the question was not whether the machinery was rateable, because clearly it was not, but whether the machinery should be taken into account in fixing the value of the buildings and manufactory. He argued that the factory was no good for the purpose intended without the machinery. Why did he not go a step further and say it was no good without the material? I do not see where the line is to be drawn. The Chairman of Quarter Sessions was afraid he smelt a rat with regard to agricultural machinery. It occurred to him that if lace machines were necessary for carrying on a lace factory, ploughs and harrows were necessary for agricultural operations. He, therefore, asked whether the value of a farm-shed would be enhanced if ploughs and harrows were put in it. Mr. Balfour Browne replied No, because the shed was only for the purpose of holding something used on the farm, "whilst the lace factory would be bought and sold as a lace factory with all the machinery in it." That is not correct. Nine-tenths of the textile factories of England are, without any structural alterations whatever, just as well fitted to manufacture silk as cotton, cotton as wool, and wool as hemp. Mr. Castle, in cross-examination, explaining how he had valued the mill, made a very singular slip. He said this was the first case of any importance he had taken since the Tyne Boiler case, but in recent times he had included similar machinery in his valuation, "unless stopped by the Assessment Committee." That is what I believe is the fact, that Assessment Committees, in the great majority of cases throughout the country, have refused to allow that to be done. As to the general practice being in conformity with our Bill, the evidence was overwhelming. Mr. Thomas Leng, the Controller of Rating in Lancashire districts, stated so. (201, 212, 274, 275.) Mr. Myles Preston distinctly said so (360 to 366, 372, 373), and so did Mr. Marshall (685-6, &c.) In fact, the evidence on the point was almost unanimous. As to the enormous increase of assessment which would ensue if the Tyne boiler case were carried out logically the evidence again was clear. One witness says (Q. 220) it would drive certain trades out of the country altogether, and that it would raise the assessment of cotton mills by 125 per cent., so that a cotton mill now rated at £3,000 would be rated at £7,500. Mr. Marshall says "(729, 730) it would more than double the rating;" and Mr. Leng, Mr. Myers, and Mr. Marshall all agreed that they would have to alter their system of rating altogther if the Tyne Boiler decision was to be carried out. Mr. Marshall (634 to 936), and Mr. Myers (634, 635), admitted that, in logical sequence, agricultural implements would have to be rated. Now, Sir, manufacturers demand nothing but justice. They demand that the law shall be as it always has been here, and as it is in Scotland. But they tell you, frankly, that if you are going to rate chattels they will insist on the same principle being applied to every bit of personalty throughout the country Then, Sir, I come to that glorious Scotch decision. It sweeps away all the flimsy pretences under which manufacturers' tools and implements have been rated in this country. The case is that of the North-British Railway Company, and Lord Fraser delivered a most righteous judgment, in which he knocked on the head the contention that the precedent set in the English cases was good law and should be followed, and said that the only machinery that could be taken into account was that which was so fixed that it could not be detached without destruction to itself and injury and destruction to the building. I have shown the House that the first principle of the Rating Acts is to avoid taxing personalty. The personalty of the trader, what is it but the implements of his trade, his tools, and his machines. If you tax them you will have to tax all personalty alike. You will also have to withdraw the millions you now give as contributions from the Imperial Exchequer in aid of local taxation, because those aids are given as the contribution from personalty, and because of local taxation being levied on realty. You will also destroy the last argument so often used (rightly or wrongly) in defence of the differential Death Duties. Now, what is the opposition to this Bill? We are opposed, of course, by overseers, who naturally want to make the net as wide as they can, and to screw up the assessments where they can. There are some landowners, no doubt, and some Railway Directors, but not all, as the hon. Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. J. Bolton) has written to me expressing regret that he cannot come to support the Bill this afternoon. There may be among our opponents some lawyers who think it a good thing to leave the law in its present unsettled state, so as to cause a plentiful crop of litigation. I do not think the House will take the same view. Then we have the usual counsels of procrastination. There is, on the Notice Paper, a Motion by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Heneage), which is nothing but a Motion of procrastination. But this is too serious a matter for delay. The traders of the country refuse to wait. We shall be happy to entertain any suggestions for amendment. We hope the Government will not oppose us, and we will gladly accept from them any Amendments which do not affect the principle of the Bill; but procrastinate we will not. If you wish for a new system of taxation let wealth be taxed, and not industry. Tax the honey when the bees have made it—but do not stop the making of the honey by taxing the bees. Tax the golden egg when it is laid, if you like, but do not kill the goose that lays it. I appeal to the House to pass the Bill. The traders of this country look with the greatest interest to what the House will do in this matter; for my own part, though a manufacturer, I would not have taken part in forwarding this legislation if I did not believe that the interests of labour were more bound up in it than even those of the manufacturers. Any extra tax on industry must rebound on the wages of the employed. It is true that the division of profits, as between capital and labour, are often unfair. But that is not the question here. The question is whether, if you handicap the earnings of manufacturers, you will not diminish the earnings of all classes engaged. Any tax on industry, I repeat, must re-act on wages. You cannot leave industry too free, and I appeal to the House to remove this special taxation from the manufacturing interests of the country, and to give fair play at a time when many of them are subject to severe competition. I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—*(Mr. Winterbotham.)*

*(1.35.) SIR W. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I am quite sure the House must recognise the very great ability and clearness with which the arguments in support of this Bill have been stated by my hon. Friend who has just sat down, and I should not have intervened in the debate except for two reasons. In the first place, I was a member of the Committee which considered, a few years ago, what was practically the same Bill as the one now before the House; and in the second place, the Bill refers to a subject and to circumstances which are of vital import-

ance and interest to the great industries of this country, especially those in the North of England. I will endeavour to summarise, in as short a manner as I can, the main arguments why legislation seems to be necessary, and will say at once that this Bill is an honest attempt, after very careful consideration, to provide a remedy for what we think is a grievance. At the same time, I am quite sure that the majority, if not all of those who support the Bill, and who have framed and considered it, are perfectly prepared to consider any suggestions or Amendments which may be made consistent with the principles which form the basis of the measure. I admit it is a most complicated and difficult question, and I doubt whether any Bill could be framed which would cover the whole of the question of rating. Therefore, it is quite possible that whatever Act is passed by this House there will be certain exceptions to be made. Already there are exceptions in the general law of rating, as, for instance, in the case of gas and water works and other industries, and so there may have to be other exceptions. The three reasons which influenced those who have supported the Bill are these: In the first place, the uncertainty of the law with regard to rating; secondly, the gross inequalities which exist throughout the country in the administration of this law—inequalities due very much, no doubt, to the uncertainty of the law—and, in the third place, the gradual, and, I think I may say, insidious extensions which have been made of recent years to the law as it stands, based upon judicial decisions. Whether these decisions support the extensions or not may be an open question, but at any rate they have been made, and the time has arrived when some effort must be made to put this question on a clear and equal footing. The evidence before the Committee fully proved the uncertainty of the law. We had before us a considerable number of experts, who are supposed to have studied what the law is, and yet it will be found by anyone who takes the trouble to read the evidence, that no two of the witnesses agreed as to what the principle of the law was. I will only give three specimens of these differences of opinion. In the first place, we had placed before us the judicial decision in the Bishop Wearmouth case. The form of that decision was this:—

> "That in estimating the ratable value of premises used as a manufactory, machinery and plant placed therein for the purpose of making them fit as premises for such machinery are to be taken into account as enhancing the value of the heraditaments, although they are not physically attached to the premises."

Whatever that judgment really means in the estimation of Rating Authorities, it means that all machinery, of whatever character, whether it be small or large, must be rated, and we know that certain Rating Authorities have taken that as their text, and acted thereon. Then we come to the valuable opinion of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Staffordshire (Mr. Staveley Hill). He did not back up this view of the law. He took another principle, namely, that there must be adaptation in the premises in which the machine stands, or some connection with them and the machine, before that machine can be rated. But he went so far as to say that, even if an ordinary floor be altered from wood to concrete for the purpose of a single machine, a machine, which otherwise would not be rated, then became rateable, although not attached in any way, and still movable. I do not think this is a principle which can be supported by common-sense, even though it may be supported by law. In many cases within my own knowledge it is quite common in fireproof factories to put a wooden floor in order that the spinning mules—which he distinctly said in his evidence were not rateable—may be attached to that floor. In that case we should have not an adaptation of the building such as I think the hon. and learned Gentleman had in his mind, yet one which on his principle would render these mules liable to be rated. Then they had a third definition of the law given to the Committee, principally by Mr. Edmunds, the London and North-Western rating agent He adopted a very simple principle. He did not go into the question of whether or not a building was adapted to the machinery, but said that if a machine was not driven by any motive power it was not rateable, but if it was so driven that moment it became rateable. That is another interpretation of the law which is put before the Rating Authorities, who have therefore to grope about amongst these various interpretations. One of the most important reasons for some action on the part of the House is this absolute uncertainty of the law. The hon. and learned Member for Staffordshire tried to convince the Committee that there had not been any change in the law, and that it was perfectly well understood; but while he may theoretically make out his case, practically, when we have to deal with the thousand and one circumstances in which the industries of the country are placed, we shall find there is not any satisfactory rule for the Rating Authorities to go by, and that they are bewildered by the many judicial and other decisions which have been given. The consequence is that there is an enormous inequality throughout the country in the mode in which these assessments are made. The case of Scotland has been alluded to by my hon. Friend opposite, and I would just emphasise the statement that in Scotland there is no uncertainty whatever with regard to the law. It was certain even before the judgment of Lord Fraser. There is no difficulty, because they deal with this question solely with reference to what is or is not heritable. The learned Judge said the law of Scotland was that the lands and heritages to be assessed included all machinery fixed or attached to them; but that it must be fixed in such a manner that it could not be detached from the building without destruction to itself or injury or destruction to the building. That is a principle with which the Bill is thoroughly in harmony, although it may appear to be a slight extension. There may be heavy machines in addition to engine boilers and shafting, which if removed might destroy or disturb the buildings, and in such cases my own impression is that it would be perfectly fair to rate them. If words could be devised in Committee on this Bill which would give that additional extension I, for one, would be very glad to accept them. But I believe that the cases to which it would apply would be very few indeed throughout the country. I have found amongst my notes a quotation which I have not verified from the Irish Act 23 Vic., c. 43—

> "In making the valuation of any mill or manufactory or building erected or used for any such purpose the Commissioner of Valuation shall in each case value the water or other motive power thereof, but shall not take into account the value of any machinery therein, save only such as shall be erected or used for the production of motive power."

That is precisely the Bill before the House. We have therefore a clear law in Scotland and Ireland. What we want is that England also should have a clear law and more equality in the mode of making assessments throughout the country. At present the law is strained, and decisions have been given which the Rating Authorities are bound to use. We want the extensions of the law by these decisions to be stopped. I know that it is said that Lord Esher's decision does not go as far as some of the Rating Authorities contend; but it is quite evident that it means one of two things. Either it means structural fitness, in which case heavy machines on a concrete floor will not be rateable, or it means that all machines that are necessary for the trade which is being carried on will be rated. If the latter is the law then I think it is obvious it must go very much further and include the furniture of furnished houses as well as the machinery of certain industries, because the question really is this—are premises to be treated and rated as furnished or unfurnished? If Lord Esher's decision is taken in the larger sense we are treating manufactories as furnished buildings. There is no doubt that a very great change has taken place owing to this decision, and therefore it is not too early for us to call upon the House to put a stop to the great inequalities which will take place if it is acted upon. In the case of Manchester the Rating Authorities have refused to change their system or to adopt the recent decisions; but the Chorlton Union, which is really a part of Manchester, have felt bound—and nobody can blame them—to adopt those decisions. There are, therefore, two Rating Authorities in one place acting on diametrically opposite principles, and competitors in the same industries are treated on principles entirely different. This is not merely the question of a few pounds. It means a difference of twice or thrice the amount, and, as in the Chard case, even five times the amount of the assessment. These unequal burdens on competitors are manifestly unfair. Very strong evidence was given by all the Rating Authorities that they entirely disapprove these new decisions, and they have delayed putting them into operation. But that cannot go on very much longer. They are bound to the whole of the ratepayers to follow the declared law, and the Select Committee was told that they are only waiting to see what is the fate of this Bill before deciding how they will act. If this Bill is thrown out then there is no doubt these Authorities will take immediate action, and there will be a complete revolution in the system of rating throughout the country. There will probably be an immense amount of litigation unless settlements are made, simply by deciding upon a money value which those who are assessed will accept. This will not be a settlement upon principle; and a more unsatisfactory mode cannot be found than that of negotiations of this character between occupiers and the Assessing Authorities. I trust, therefore, that the Government will accept the Second Reading of the Bill. On every ground they ought to do so. I think they will clearly see the urgent call for legislation. The promoters of the Bill are not so absolutely enamoured of their own work that they believe no improvement can be made. I would be glad if, after the Second Reading, a sufficient time were given before going into Committee, so that the Amendments might be carefully considered. I am sorry the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) is unable to be present; because as far back as June, 1878, the right hon. Gentleman, who was not then a Member of the Government, called attention to this subject, and he used these words—

> "There was no doubt that machinery not attached to the freehold was subject to rating in some places and not in others, whilst by a recent decision of the High Court of Justice (the Bishop Wearmouth case) all machinery, even though it be not taxed, was liable to be rated. By the law a man would be liable to be assessed not on rent alone, but on the valuation of all his machinery."

In reply to Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Sclater Booth, then President of the Local Government Board, said the question of rating was not germane to the Bill then before the House, but he would be very glad to settle the question of the rating of machinery, as well as of coal mines and of schools, and such questions should find their place in a new Rating Bill, which he should not be reluctant to introduce if he found it possible. So there was a promise from a Conservative Government in 1878 that they would look into the matter and deal with it. We have waited for 12 years, the grievance is getting worse, and cases of complaint are arising throughout the whole country. I do trust the Government will give their support and sympathy to this attempt at legislation. I do not believe, after the inquiry made by the Committee, and the consideration they gave to the Bill, that it would be possible for a Government Bill to depart very far from the lines of the measure now before us, though I do not say that it may not be improved by Amendments. I commend the Bill to the consideration of the House, and urge the House to consider it as an attempt to deal with a serious grievance, which ought to find a remedy in legislation.

*(2.20.) Mr. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I rise to move the Amendment which stands in my name, and I have to thank the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Williams) for allowing me precedence on this occasion, and for his promise to second my Motion. I should not have taken any part in this debate if it had not been for the statement, widely spread, that this Bill has in its support the authority of the Select Committee of 1887. I demur very strongly to that statement. It is quite true, as I will show, that the Bill of 1887, introduced by the hon. Baronet the Member for Banbury (Sir Bernhard Samuelson), was amended by that Committee, but it was not until quite the end of the proceedings of the Committee, and after they had passed Resolutions not in consonance with the Amendments to the Bill. I quite agree with the hon. Member for the Cirencester Division (Mr. Winterbotham) it is most desirable that this question, and many other questions connected with assessment and rating, should be dealt with, but

what I object to is this question in connection with machinery being taken apart, while other questions are left untouched. We have been told of a promise of a Rating Bill made 12 years ago, and after this long period the promise remains unfulfilled, but if this Bill passes this Session, it will tend still further to defer the fulfilment of that promise. I object to losing the leverage that this question of the rating of machinery gives us. I have always considered—I am not going into the subject now—that the real solution of the whole rating question was that a revised property and income tax assessment should be taken as the basis of all rates, and I believe it will eventually come to that. But I do object to dealing with the question in this fragmentary manner. This Bill has the support of the hon. Member for Cirencester, but it is a curious fact that he is the only Member out of the six who back it who was not a Member of that Committee. I am quite ready to admit, with him, that the whole question of rating is unsatisfactory, but that was exactly the point that was taken up by the Committee in 1887, when they, having heard all the witnesses, sitting for nearly two months, and having adjourned for over six weeks to consider their Report, came to an unanimous decision to pass three Resolutions, the first of which, generally stated, was to the effect that the state of the law was unsatisfactory, and especially with regard to the rating of machinery; and then they went on to declare, in the words of my Amendment, that they believed the Bill afforded a basis for an equitable system of assessment in cases of industries depending mainly upon fixed motive power; and then the Committee expressed the opinion that the difficulties of defining a satisfactory principle of valuation for the purpose of assessment generally were so great as to render it desirable that the matter should be dealt with as part of a comprehensive scheme of local taxation. Now, that was the opinion of the Select Committee, and it was not until a fortnight after, and that when but a few Members were present, all more or less interested in the Bill under discussion, and by a majority of two, they decided, instead of reporting

the Bill without Amendments, that they would take up the Bill and amend it. It was amended, and sent down to the House, more or less, in its present shape. I, therefore, say the Bill has no authority from that Select Committee whatsoever, and that is only the expression of the opinion of a minority of the majority, for only six voted for the Bill in its amended shape out of a Committee of 13. I believe if it had been understood in June that this measure was to have been dealt with in Committee, it would have come down here in a very different shape. But we—many of us—believed that the Resolutions passed were passed in absolute good faith; and that the Committee were convinced, not so much on the distinct legal decisions given from time to time, as that there would be the greatest difficulty in dealing with this question alone, apart from the general question of rating. This Bill must stand upon its own merits and not on the authority of that Committee. The whole system of rating is an anomaly, and the method of valuation differs in districts in the same county, and why, I ask, should machinery alone be dealt with? We are told that overseers are only waiting for guidance in regard to machinery; but they are waiting for guidance just as much upon other subjects besides machinery. We are told the Bill is, more or less, identical with the Bill of 1887, and that was founded on the fear of increased assessments arising out of the decision on the Tyne Boiler Works case, confirmed by the Queen's Bench. We have also had the Chard case quoted, and the opinion of Mr. Balfour Browne. I prefer to take the opinion of the Master of the Rolls, and the other learned Judges. The Master of the Rolls distinctly repudiated the idea that at any time there was a right to limit the machinery rateable to either "fixed," "attached," or "annexed." He said—

> "Things which are on the premises, all which are there for the purpose of making and make them (*i.e.* the premises) fit as premis for the particular purpose for which they are used, ought to be taken into account."

We have been told that the other learned Judge (Lord Justice Lindley) did not go so far as the Master of the Rolls, but we heard nothing at all about Lord Justice Lopes. He concurred in the decision and declared it was founded on "good sense" and "good law." We are fortunate, I think, in having good sense and good law going hand in hand in this matter. There is one point upon which this Bill differs from the Bill of 1887, and that is in the preamble. The preamble in the Bill of 1887—I am speaking from recollection, I have not the Bill before me—referred most distinctly to the Statute of Queen Elizabeth for the relief of the poor, by which all property locally situated and producing profit was made rateable in each parish, and, therefore, it was admitted that machinery ought to be taxed on the same principle as land, coal mines, and other property, under that Act. At that time, it should be remembered, agriculture bore the whole burden of local taxation, for it was the only industry of the country, but as soon as coal mining became a great industry, mines were taxed. In 1769, on a decision in "King *v.* Hogg," a house and machine rented together were adjudged to be rated together. In 1836 ironworks and machinery were adjudged to be rated to their actual value by a decision in the case "King *v.* Guest." Again, in 1848 in the case "Queen *v.* Southampton," machinery, though movable, was adjudged to be rateable if so far attached as to be appendages essential to its working, and increasing the value of the premises. These are examples of legal decisions based on the Statute of Elizabeth, that property should pay according to its ability. There was another case decided in 1866, "Queen *v.* Lee," in which gasworks were concerned, and the rateability of machinery which would pass to a new tenant, and was necessary for the production of gas, was declared to be judged, not by the degree of annexation, but whether it was part of the premises. I think it will be found, also, that in the case of a ship-yard, "Lavy *v.* Weirmouth," 1878, a steam hammer and certain tools were held to be rateable on the same principle as in the decision of "Queen *v.* Lee." What was the decision of Justice Lush in the case "Queen *v.* Lee?" In "Reg. *v.* Lee" Mr. Justice Lush said—

> "I apprehend that the premises to be rated are to be taken as they are, with all their fittings and appliances, by which the owner has adapted them to a particular use, and which would pass as part of the premises by a demise of them to a tenant."

Chief Justice Cockburn concurred that the machinery should be essential to the adaptation of the premises to a particular use. Therefore, I venture to say that in all these judgments the question raised has been whether there was any machinery which brought in profit to its owner, and where it was adapted for the particular business of that owner it has always been held that it was liable to be rated. I recollect the hon. Member for the Kingswinford Division of Staffordshire stating before the Select Committee that, in his opinion, the law was not altered in any way by these decisions. I think he went somewhat further, and said the Bill would not restrict the amount of machinery at present rateably assessed. It is my opinion, however, that the Bill will restrict the machinery which is, and has been for a long time, assessed to the rates, and unless this is its purpose I cannot understand why it has been introduced. As the law now stands, I hold that the *dicta* of the Judges has been perfectly consistent, and I am bound to say that if, instead of taking certain answers given in evidence by the valuers before the Committee, the whole tenour of their remarks is considered, you will find that they are more or less in agreement with the decisions of the Judges. The evidence of Mr. Myers has been alluded to; but the sum total of it all is that when he valued a general principle was laid down in regard to machinery that, whether it was attached or not, if it was specially adapted for the business it was liable to rating. The question of standing for the machinery forms a vital part of the Bill. The word you have to watch in it is "fixed," or, as a witness before the Committee put it, "bolted down." The Committee were informed that a great quantity of most valuable machinery is not bolted down or fixed at all, but it stands by its own weight on specially prepared beds. We have been told that the present law leads to much litigation, but this Bill, if passed, will lead to a great deal more, for it will raise many fresh difficulties. I repeat that the Judges, and the Rating

Authorities, are all more or less in agreement as to the law, and the real difficulty in the matter is that there is a difference of action among those whose business it is to make the assessment. What did Mr. Marshall say? He defines rateable machinery as machinery bolted down, and when pressed he included cranes and machinery walled in. As to the Tyne case, all he said was that the decision went a little further than the Bishop of Wearmouth case. All the valuers called before the Committee seemed at first much frightened at the decision in the Tyne case, but their fears soon disappeared. The agent of the London and North-Western Railway Company straightforwardly told the Committee he did not consider that the decisions in either the Tyne boiler case or the Bishop Wearmouth case had extended the rateable assessment of machinery. This was the opinion of a man well versed in rating questions in half the counties of England. Therefore, I repeat that the Judges and Rating Authorities are more or less in agreement as to the law; the real difficulty is the difference of action amongst those whose business it is to make the assessment. Is there not just as much difference of opinion and action in regard to other matters than machinery that came under the cognisance of the Assessment Authorities? What we want is a comprehensive Valuation Bill, which would settle these matters once for all, whereas the effect of the Bill now proposed would be to delay the introduction of such a measure. I contend, also, that this Bill is strongly opposed to the tendency of modern legislation, which has been to extend rather than to restrict the area of rating. In recent years the principle has been extended in many directions to mines, sporting rights, underwood, lunatic asylums, Crown lands, and advertising walls, and why should the House now retrace its steps in respect to one subject alone, and relieve from rating that which has hitherto been subject to it? Moreover, it must be borne in mind that others will have to pay the rates from which the owners of machinery are sought to be relieved. Upon whose shoulders will they fall? Are the small ratepayers in the country, the agricultural labourers, or the small shopkeepers in the towns better able to bear them than the large manufacturer? I object altogether to this rating being taken off the manufacturer by this partial Bill, without knowing exactly on what other shoulders it will fall. I think the Select Committee were perfectly right when, after many weeks' consideration of the evidence brought before them, they decided that the question was one to be dealt with, not in a fragmentary way, but by a comprehensive Bill of local taxation, and I hope the debate, if it has no other effect, will hasten the introduction by the Government of the Valuation Bill which they have distinctly promised. I should like to know how hon. Members who voted for that Resolution in the Committee can justify their support of the Bill on this occasion, seeing that it only partially alters the law, and does not deal with the main question. I certainly think the present Bill is unnecessary, mischievous, and unjust to the smaller ratepayers in the country and in the towns, and that it would greatly militate against the chances of that reform in valuation assessment which taxation reformers have desired for many years. For these reasons I object to the Second Reading of the Bill, and I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name, and which embodies the decision unanimously arrived at by the Committee.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, whilst believing that the Bill affords a basis for an equitable system of assessment in cases of industries depending mainly upon fixed motive power, is of opinion that the difficulties of defining a satisfactory principle of valuation for the purpose of assessment generally are so great as to render it desirable that the matter should be dealt with as part of a comprehensive scheme of local taxation,"—(*Mr. Heneage,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

(2.43.) MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I had given notice to move the rejection of the Bill, but when I learned that the right hon. Member for Grimsby had been a Member of the Select Committee on the subject I felt no difficulty in giving way to him and contenting myself with seconding the Amendment. The hon. Member for East Gloucestershire has, in a very effective speech, described at great length the anomalies of the present system; but the task was unnecessary, and I think he was a little killing the slain, for certainly no hon. Member in any part of the House will deny that great anomalies do exist. Nor does any one say that those anomalies should not be remedied, and that there should not be uniformity throughout the Kingdom in relation to this question of rating. But this Bill seeks to give uniformity in the wrong direction. It is, in my opinion, a Bill for the relief of manufacturers, without any consideration whatever for those who will suffer if that relief is granted. It has been said that the decisions which have been given in relation to the subject are steps in the wrong direction, and that it is proposed by the Bill to remedy this. It has also been said that the decisions are doubtful; but, having read the decision in the Tyne Boiler case, I confess that it seems to me to be perfectly clear and to afford ground for practical action. Some reference has been made to the judgment delivered by Lord Justice Lindley in that case, and the hon. Member seems to think that that judgment does not altogether coincide with the judgment previously delivered by the Master of the Rolls. But Lord Justice Lindley, towards the end of his Judgment, said—

> "It seems to me that the true test is that which the Master of the Rolls endeavoured to lay down."

So you have a clear meaning in the judgment of the Master of the Rolls, and Lord Justice Lindley agrees with it, and places his authority behind it. This question has been argued technically in the House already, and I should like to argue it practically. The hon. Member for the Cirencester Division said the effect of the decision in the Tyne Boiler case would be to double the rating of mills, and, further on in the course of his speech, he cited the Chard case, and showed to what an enormous extent the rating of a particular mill there would be raised in the event of this decision being pressed to its logical outcome. I admit that; but the hon. Member left altogether out of sight the relief which would be afforded to the other ratepayers, and this is the most important element to be taken into consideration. The present Bill proposes to exempt from rating all machinery, except fixed motive power, and I am told that under its provisions shafts, wheels, and drums will be exempted. How would such a provision affect the great city, a division of which I have the honour to represent. It would undoubtedly diminish the present rating value of Birmingham to the extent of £25,000 or £30,000. Something has been said of the practice adopted in Birmingham. Well, I am not careful to defend that practice. But it does not profess to be an accurate system. The plan adopted there is an arrangement or compromise, which has been acted upon without dispute, as between the Rating Authority and the manufacturers whose machinery is rated. Undoubtedly the system has been productive of good practical results. Each nominal horse-power is taken at £2 10s. per horse per annum, and that is believed to include the value of the fixed or unfixed or removable machinery which is worked from the engine so rated. It is believed that the system has worked fairly well in the interests of all concerned. If, by passing this Bill, the rating value of Birmingham is reduced by £25,000 or £30,000 the burden will, of course, fall upon the shopkeepers and householders. This means that a sum of about £8,000, now paid in the rates by the manufacturers of Birmingham, will be levied on the other contributors to the rates. I maintain that that is a step entirely in the wrong direction, and, if adopted, it would inevitably lead to an increase of rents to small occupiers. By the introduction of machinery you make employment more scarce, yet you are asked to exempt from rates that machinery, and to put heavier burdens on the people, who find it more difficult to get employment because of the use of the machinery. I believe the result in the case of Birmingham would be to throw an extra 1½d. rate on the already overweighted shopkeepers, and, on their behalf, I protest against the proposal. The Motion which I have put on the Paper is directed against the principle of the Bill, which, I think, is a wrong principle. In my opinion it is a principle which a Radical House of Commons would not be disposed to accept. In the United States of America not only house property and rent, but also chattels are rated, and unquestionably the tendency of things is in that direction here. If this Bill passes something will be done to contradict the principle, and, therefore, I hope the House will accept the Amendment moved by my right hon. Friend.

*(2.58.) MR. MOWBRAY (Lancashire, Prestwich): As a member of the Select Committee, I desire to say a few words in reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby. It is perfectly true, as he has told us, that a Resolution was passed in the Committee to the effect that it was desirable that this matter should be dealt with as a comprehensive scheme. But another Resolution was also carried with equal unanimity to the effect that it was clear that the system acted upon by valuers varied in different parts of the country, and they recommended fresh legislation on the subject. The Committee also unanimously passed a Resolution that, in the meantime, it was desirable that the Rating Authorities should not depart from their present system. The system of assessment has since that been materially altered by the valuers and Rating Authorities, and, therefore, apart from anything else, we are justified in pressing the importance of this subject upon the House. Although we voted for the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby in 1887, yet in 1890 we are no nearer a comprehensive solution of the question than we were in 1887. Judging from the favourable cheers with which the speeches of hon. Members have been received to-day, in favour of the Bill, I venture to think that the feeling of the House is against an Amendment of the procrastinating character moved by the right hon. Gentleman. The only point which the House has to consider is this. We are not asking for any special exemption of machinery from liability to rating. We are only asking in this Bill, that the principle which is believed by the majority of valuers to govern rating shall be declared by this House to be the law of the land. It is not a preposterous proposition that it is the duty of this House to make the law of the land clear and intelligible. In spite of the very able arguments and evidence of the hon. and learned Member for Staffordshire, the Rating Authorities are still in very much doubt as to what are the true principles to be deduced from the decisions of the Judges. This Bill lays down clear and definite directions, which no Rating Authority will have very much difficulty in putting into force. We have been told that the law has not been altered by recent decisions. I am perfectly ready to admit that, if you like, but I say that the practice will be altered, and in support of that, I refer to the evidence given before the Committee of the House of Commons by Mr. Myers, of Preston. Asked whether, in the Bishop Wearmouth case, looms had not been considered furniture, he replied—

> "Yes, I quite agree with that.
>
> "From that you would judge that they did not intend to include looms, would you not?"
>
> "Yes, certainly."

So much for the law laid down in the Bishop Wearmouth case.

> "But your opinion is, is it not, that under the Tyne boiler case they would be bound to include looms?"

What is his answer to that?—

> "Yes.
>
> "And all similar machines?
>
> "Yes, and all similar machines—mules, carding machines, would all have to come in."

Then he was asked by the hon. Member for Stirlingshire whether, if the decision in the boiler case were carried out, it would not require that everything should be included—

> "Yes; that is my belief."

That is exactly the evidence which was given by almost every witness who came before the Committee. Whether the law has been altered or not does not matter, because there is no doubt whatever that the views of the people who act under that law have been altered, and that is what we have to deal with. The Rating Authorities are altering their principle of assessment, and what will be the result? That we shall have heavy and expensive appeals, at great cost to the Rating Authorities, and at great cost to the people upon whom these new rates are placed. It is our duty as Representatives of the constituencies to do what we can to prevent this accession of costs, and to put the law upon a plain and intelligible footing, and that, I believe, is done by the Bill before the House. One word with regard to what has been said by the hon. Member for Birmingham. I do not want to go into the system of rating in Birmingham, beyond saying that it seems that Birmingham has made a law of its own, which is not laid down by the learned Judges. It is not the law as enforced in other parts of the country. Although Birmingham may be perfectly well satisfied with the Law of Rating as it at present exists, I venture to remind the hon. Gentleman that his constituents will find their position very materially altered in many cases if the decision in the Tyne Boiler case is put into operation. With regard to what he said about throwing on the general ratepayers of Birmingham a burden now borne by manufacturing industries, I do not know how far that may be true of Birmingham, but as regards industries in other parts of the country, the practice has not, up to now, been to rate machinery in the way in which it will be rated in future if this Tyne Boiler case is carried out. The change, if it is made, will press very heavily, not only upon the manufacturing industries, but upon the working classes who are employed in those industries. You may say what you like with regard to diminishing the rates of other people; but if you put this additional 125 per cent. on to the mills of Lancashire, you will go far to impose a burden which the industry is unable to bear. I would remind the House that if you put a burden of that kind upon a particular industry the tendency will inevitably be to drive the trade over the border or into foreign countries. If you stop the mills of Lancashire you will not only take money out of the pockets of the wealthy classes of that region, but you will deprive working men of their labour and drive them to the workhouse, where they will be a greater burden to the other ratepayers than anything that would fall upon them by reason of any definition of the law such as this Bill proposes. I venture to trust that the House will not be misled by the arguments which have been adduced to it, and that it will support the Second Reading of this Bill.

*(3.12.) Mr. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton): Sir, the constituency which I have the honour to represent is one especially interested in this question. I have been asked to represent the feelings of large manufacturers, and I desire to say a few words in relation to the Bill which has been introduced by my hon. Friend. We are not discussing the abolition of a tax. There has been hitherto a comparatively uniform practice throughout the country, and the rating of premises devoted to manufacturing industries has hitherto been on a certain fixed principle. That principle has been recently interfered with, and certain alterations have been made during the last three or four years. And there has arisen in the minds of manufacturers generally throughout the country that eventually all machinery employed for manufacturing purposes is henceforth to be taxed in the same way as machines that are fixed. It is thought that system will be followed after the decision in the Tyne Boiler case. In my own constituency the chief industry is that of engineering and machine making, although there are some textile manufacturers in that district. Owing to the decision in the Tyne Boiler case this new practice is beginning to spread very rapidly; it is becoming the actual fact with regard to the industry with which I am connected, namely, that everything connected with the premises in which these manufactures are carried on, even to the smallest tool fixed to the bench, or lying on the bench, is already taxed by the assessors of that district. And they hold that the justification of that course is to be found in the decision in the Tyne Boiler case. If that is to be the interpretation of the law, I would ask any sensible man where are we to stop? What industry will escape from this terrible enactment, which, I venture to say, has nothing whatever to do with the wealth or poverty of the manufacturers, but simply

is a question of justice. The industries of this country are not carried on solely for the benefit of certain gentlemen who call themselves employers or manufacturers. They are carried on for the benefit of the whole conntry, and the working classes are more intimately connected with those industries than perhaps any other class of the community. Take my own works, in the town of Salford, which is practically one with Manchester. I have a pretty considerable engineering establishment in Salford, and I pursue my business with perfect immunity from all those taxes. But at Openshaw, only two or three miles away, my competitors are taxed down to the smallest machine tools. This is a gross injustice which would not be tolerated for a moment were there not some strange ambiguity about the law which neither Judges, assessors, or valuers understand. It is evident to those who have read the Report of the Committee that confusion becomes worse confounded as the witnesses are examined at greater and greater length. If you want to get at the state of confusion in which the Committee found itself you have only to refer to the Resolution which my hon. Friend the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) has brought under our notice. I do urgently appeal to the House to take this matter into consideration as quickly as possible. The prevalent custom throughout the country is that premises for manufacturing purposes shall be valued according to the purposes for which it is intended. An exception, owing to the uncertainty of the law, is the case of the works to which I have alluded at Openshaw. Those works are taxed to the smallest machine, and yet, during the next three months, the whole of the machinery could be sold by auction and adapted to the purposes of some other business or manufacture, thus showing that the walls, and roofs, and windows, with engine power, are alone absolutely essential to the carrying on of any particular trade in those premises. Indeed, it is almost impossible to conceive a case, except such as a gas works or some such industry, where a special kind of structure has to be incorporated with the machinery, where this observation does not apply. Empty any one of the cotton mills of Lancashire of its looms and spindles, and it would be capable of being used for some other purpose. I have a large building, which was formerly used as a woollen mill in my own works, and it is most admirably adapted, without the slightest alteration, to the purposes of a machine shop. You see, consequently, how we get landed in serious difficulties when we consider that the value of certain premises is enhanced simply because of the character of the machinery which it contains. I should like, for a moment, to allude to what has been said by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby in relation to the question of relieving wealthy manufacturers and capitalists, at the cost of other ratepayers, who are well able to take care of themselves and who have always plenty of money. In my opinion the history of the manufactures of this country proves the very opposite of this; at any rate, in the North of England, with which I am acquainted, the manufacturers pursue their business with the desire to maintain their industry and give their *employés* the largest amount of work at the highest rate of wages they can possibly pay. The whole history of the industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire goes to show that employers feel the greatest pride in the continual promotion of the interests of their workpeople, so as to enable them to live in better houses, and, as far as possible, to attain a greater amount of happiness in their everyday life. But, if owing to the peculiar interpretation put upon the law, the manufacturers are to be subjected to a greater burden than heretofore — a burden which, perhaps, may not be imposed on competitors, say, in an adjoining county—then I say that such a course is unjust, and contrary to the true spirit of the law; and that, whatever may be the prosperity of the individual manufacturer, or body of manufacturers, they have a right to see, and are bound to see, that such legislation is passed as will make the burdens imposed on the industries of this country just and uniform, and as will remove such inequalities as are now complained of. The only desire of the manufacturers, whether engaged in the production of textile fabrics, the manufacture of iron, the bleaching of calico, or in any other industry, is to do equal justice to all. If this House declares that all implements and tools shall be taxed we shall have no complaint to make; but, at the present moment, that is not the case. The case of Birmingham is not in any way a representative one. There they absolutely traverse the law, and say they have nothing to do with valuing machinery, boilers, or engines, but simply take engines of a certain horse-power, on which 50s. per annum has to be paid. The practice of Birmingham is not in conformity with the law, and does not affect the state of things in operation elsewhere, under which, over an area of probably five square miles, we have some manufacturers taxed to the uttermost extent, while others in the same locality are entirely exempt. This Bill will in no way interfere with the entire question of valuation being dealt with at a subsequent period; but we say that, in the meantime, the grievance to which attention is being called to a certain extent paralyses the industry of the North of England. I trust, therefore, the House will take the matter into its serious consideration to-day, and consent to the Second Reading of this Bill. When the Bill gets into Committee the House can impose such safeguards as will prevent various interests which have hitherto been protected from being injuriously affected by the operation of the measure. As the matter stands at present it is quite clear that there is danger that the industries of the North will be interfered with in a manner wholly inimical to their best interests, and the House is now asked to hasten to alleviate an evil which has already given rise to the greatest discontent.

*(3.25.) Mr. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham): Sir, I represent a town which, almost more than any other, is affected by this Bill, and I, therefore, feel it necessary to ask the indulgence of the House while I briefly state the opinion of the Nottingham manufacturers in regard to this question. This is a subject of vital importance to the trade of Nottingham. The trade of that place is already sufficiently handicapped by foreign competition, although their movable machines —used in the lace and hosiery trades— are at present *not* rated; but if this Bill is not passed, and it is rendered liable to this rating of machinery, the trade of Nottingham will be driven out entirely. I would point out that, instead of this Bill bringing hardship upon the working men, the extra burdens that will otherwise be imposed will assuredly have the effect I have stated, and the result will be that the working men of Nottingham and the thousands of girls employed in the factories, will lose their present employment, while ruin and suffering will be brought home to them and their families. The case of Birmingham has been alluded to, but we do not want to follow the lead of Birmingham in this matter. Birmingham is very good with regard to Imperial matters, but we are not inclined to follow it in the matter of rating, as to which it seems to be altogether an anomaly. The Nottingham Chamber of Commerce supports this Bill. A few weeks ago I attended a meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, held in London, and at that meeting a resolution was proposed in favour of this measure. That resolution was carried without a single dissentient voice. What, I ask, will be the result if the House refuses to pass this Bill? Where will the line be drawn in future? At sewing machines perhaps? But there are different kinds of "sewing" machines. There are the *sowing* and mowing machines used in agriculture, and I would warn hon. Members representing agricultural constituencies that if movable machines come to be rated, it will soon be their turn to have burdens imposed on the scientific implements of agriculture. This Bill is merely a defining Bill—a settling Bill—and contains no innovation or alteration of the law as formerly interpreted. It simply proposes the adoption of the old principle that what is fixed to the premises shall be rated, but that what is removable shall not be rated. We want this matter settled without any further delay, and, for my part, I have great pleasure in voting for the Second Reading of this Bill.

*(3.28.) Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Kingswinford): I do not intend to enter on a long speech in answer to the hon. Member for Cirencester (Mr. Winterbotham),

still less, to use his own expression, do I intend "to wallow in any legal discussion." I desire, as briefly as I am able, to lay before the House my views on the question which we have to decide. The matter which has been put before the House as the reason for bringing forward this Bill is simply this: Doubts have arisen as to how far machinery is to be taken into consideration in the process of rating, and it is this point with which the Bill proposes to deal: But, whatever may be the object of the Bill, it must necessarily be the consequence that if this measure is passed a considerable quantity of machinery will be exempted from the area of rateability, and the rates formerly paid in respect of the machinery so rated must fall on other kinds of property. It was on this point that Mr. Clark spoke with reference to Birmingham. Birmingham has been spoken of as having a law to itself, but if we only look and see what is done in Birmingham, in regard to rating, there is no such thing as a Birmingham-created law, but Birmingham has taken, as I think, a very excellent way of rating machinery. Instead of taking the value of the machinery at its cost or its structural value, and putting upon it 7½ per cent., the assessment has been made at the rate of 50s. per horse power, so that the rateable value of a 100 horse-power machine would be £250 a year, instead of going to the trouble of finding out the capital value and getting 7½ per cent. upon it, and this figure includes all the machinery worked by the power. By this means, so far from exempting machinery the rate is raised on machinery, as Mr. Clark has shown in his evidence. The value of the machinery is put at a higher rate, he says, if taken at 50s. per horse-power than if taken at 7½ per cent. on the market value. Mr. Clark being asked as to the result if the Bill passed, said that £5,300, from which the owners of machinery would be freed, would have to be spread over the whole rateable value and that £5,000 represented about a penny rate.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS: In the parish of Birmingham?

*Mr. STAVELEY HILL: Yes, in the parish of Birmingham. So then it comes to this upon the witness's showing, that £5,000 taken out of the area of rateable value, this liability from which you release the larger machine owners would fall upon the smaller men. You cannot get out of that.

*Mr. WINTERBOTHAM: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman state whether, from the evidence, I am not right in saying the difference would be between 6s. 7d. and 6s. 8d. to all the ratepayers?

*Mr. STAVELEY HILL: It may be so as a matter of calculation, but it does not so appear in the evidence. It would come to an increase of the rates all over the parish of Birmingham to the extent of a penny or three half-pence. Now, that being so, what is put forward as the reason for this Bill? It is suggested that the Bill gives effect to the recommendations of the Committee of the House, which considered the question in 1887, notwithstanding which recommendations it is said Rating Authorities are seeking by harassing litigation to further increase the burden upon the use of machinery. Now, first of all in that Committee, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) has said, every witness and the answer to every question made the prospect of the Bill more hopeless, until at last the hon. Baronet the Member for Banbury (Sir Bernhard Samuelson) appeared to be willing to give up his Bill, and to accept the Resolution now put forward by the right hon. Member for Grimsby. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mowbray) rather altered the actual state of things by reading the Resolutions in a different order to that in which they were passed. The first Resolution acknowledged the difficulties arising from there being no definition of the rating practice, and upon that followed the Resolution put forward now as an Amendment that there should be a general system and a general Rating Bill brought in to alter the whole state of things. If we are to take the authority of the Committee, it certainly was not in favour of the Bill; for the further examination of the Bill stood over for three weeks or a month.

*Mr. MOWBRAY: The hon. and learned Gentleman will find that the

Resolution was passed on June 28th, and on the 5th July the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby moved that the Bill should be reported without amendment. That was negatived by a considerable majority in the Committee.

*MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): And the Committee reported that the Bill, as amended, would meet the case of industries depending mainly upon motive power.

*MR. STAVELEY HILL: On the 28th June the Resolution was passed, and July 5th was the next meeting, when the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Grimsby moved that the Bill be reported without amendment. This was negatived by six to four. Those hon. Members who have just risen to correct me were energetic supporters of the Bill and desirous of going on with the Amendments.

*MR. MOWBRAY: I recollect that it was put to us that if we reported the Bill without amendment it was tantamount to saying that the Bill should not be proceeded with during the Session. Therefore, in voting against the Resolution, we were in favour of discussing and amending the Bill before returning it to the House.

*MR. HENEAGE: My Motion was founded on the understanding implied in the other Resolutions, that the Bill should not proceed further. It was a formal Resolution, and I regret that it was negatived.

*MR. STAVELEY HILL: In our view it was negatived by a small majority at a meeting when many of us were absent, for we had ceased to take any interest in the Bill at all. Now, the next suggestion in this Memorial which has been circulated by the promoters of this Bill is that the Bill will assimilate the system in England to the settled practice in Scotland. But that is not the fact, as the evidence will show. The evidence of Messrs. Nesbit and Munro will show that it is by no means a settled practice in Scotland. Mr. Nesbit said it would be a good thing to get a proper definition of machinery fixed or attached, and that it was a general feeling among assessors that what is held to be heritage in succession should be further defined, and he showed there was much difference of opinion. Mr. Munro, in his evidence, said, in the interest of machine owners, the Bill was undoubtedly most desirable. I do not propose to go at length into the comments upon my evidence made by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Winterbotham); but let me say, shortly, that the case for the Bill is, that there is doubt with reference to the present condition of the Rating Law. It is said there have been considerable changes effected by the decision in the Tyne Boiler case. Now, I do not know that it is very complimentary to the three learned Judges in the Court of Appeal to suppose that they have altered the law. We are generally accustomed to suppose that learned Judges are not the men who wilfully go against the law as enunciated in a series of decisions, and yet this is put before us in argument. These decisions have been going on for some three centuries, ever since the passing of the Statute of Elizabeth, with a certain developing, without alteration, until at last in the Tyne case and in the Bishop Wearmouth case, we are said to have three bad Judges altering the law. The law as laid down by Lord Esher and those who sat with him, that

> "Things which are on the premises to be rated for the purpose of making, and do make, the premises fit for the purpose for which they are used ought to be taken into account in ascertaining the rateable value of such premises."

This is said to be an alteration of the law; but my hon. Friends may remember the decision of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, which cannot be distinguished from the law as laid down by the Master of the Rolls to the effect that so long as machinery was kept in position, and added to the value of the freehold premises, it ought to be paid for. It is said again that advantage has been taken of the Wearmouth case and the Tyne Boiler case decisions, by valuators to go up and down the country harassing ratepayers by litigation and raising points that are only profitable to surveyors and lawyers. This was the prophecy made shortly after the Tyne Boiler case was decided, but the prophecy has not been fulfilled. Let me for a moment call attention to the special Report of the Committee, for it rather places the Bill in a different position to that in which it has been placed by those who have introduced it. When the Committee had gone through the whole of the evidence, then, without going into the question whether the law had been altered by recent decisions, the Committee declared their opinion that the system acted upon by valuators had varied considerably, and the practice, in the absence of legislation, would in many cases be materially affected in the future. Then the Committee went on to express the opinion that the Bill would, if amended, meet the case of those industries, depending mainly upon fixed motive power; and the Committee agreed, therefore, to report the Bill as amended to the House. Well, but is there no question to be raised on the definitions in the new Bill? It is very well to say that words may be altered or introduced in Committee, but we must give those who framed the Bill the credit for having made choice of the best words they could use, and no doubt they have taken the best advice they could avail themselves of. The Bill says—

> "From and after the passing of this Act in estimating for the purpose of assessment to the rates upon property rateable to the relief of the poor, the annual value of the machinery in this section specified upon such tenement or premises shall be taken into consideration; that is to say—first, water wheels, steam, gas, air, and electric machines, steam boilers, and all other fixed motive powers, and the fixed appurtenances thereof; secondly, shafts, wheels, drums, and other fixed power machinery which transmits the action of motive power to other machinery, fixed or loose."

Are these words sufficient? Is no question to be raised as to the meaning of the expression "fixed appurtenances thereof and fixed motive power?" I venture to say that no words in the Statute of Elizabeth or any Act passed since are more difficult of construction. You are going by this Bill to discharge from the rates all cranes, weigh-bridges, and machines of that character. Is that fair? Is it fair that the owner of a small engine should be rated upon that, but not the man with a weighing-machine, out of which he makes considerable profit? The Bill will inflict great injustice on the small ratepayers. Then we have been told of the Chard case, where disused premises were being fitted with machinery by a manufacturer to the great advantage of the people in the district, but that the owner was harassed by the imposition of rates on this machinery. The hon. Member for Cirencester read, with great unction, the argument addressed to Quarter Sessions by counsel whose ability I do not for a moment doubt, who was engaged on behalf of the Rating Authority. But surely this argument of counsel is not to be taken as indicative of the way in which judgment will go, and the case has not yet been decided by a Divisional Court, and it may perhaps be carried to the Court of Appeal, and even to the House of Lords. It shows the absolute poverty of my hon. Friend's resources in regard to finding evidence of the hostility of Rating Authorities towards machinery owners that this is the single case to which he has directed attention. Though I have been quoted at considerable length, and though I could find a good deal to answer under this part of the able speech of the hon. Member for Cirencester, I will not trouble the House further. I hope the Bill will not be carried, for I hold the view that the area of rateability should not be limited, and those who can afford to pay should not be free from their liability.

*(3.50.) MR. OLDROYD (Dewsbury): I do not think there is much force in the observation that my hon. Friend's pointed reference to the argument of the counsel in the Chard case indicates the poverty of his resources, but rather, I think, we may infer poverty in the resources of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite. The importance and the danger of the argument of the learned counsel referred to lies in the fact that after using that argument he had the decision of the Court in his favour. I will only detain the House a few minutes while I express my determination to support the Bill on the ground that it is an attempt by legislation, and in the form of a Declaratory Bill, to remove from the industries of this country what all Members will agree is detrimental to the industrial interests—the uncertainty

which now overhangs them. I wish to disclaim the insinuation which is made by some hon. Members that this Bill is brought in as an attempt on the part of manufacturers to evade the legitimate charges that ought to be made upon them for local purposes. I do not urge that manufacturers generally ought to be regarded as occupying that elevated place which the hon. Member for Gorton (Mr. Mather) has assigned to them, but they are free from liability to any just charge of an attempt to evade legitimate obligations. No doubt the history of legal decisions has shown a gradual extension of the area of rateability; and the tendency, following on the decision in the Tyne Boiler case and indicated in the action of the valuator in the Chard case, is to carry out the extension to the bitter end. I support the Bill because it is a Declaratory Bill, and not one for altering what I conceive to be the intention of Parliament. It is a Declaratory Bill with the purpose of limiting that over-widening of the area of rateability which has resulted from successive decisions of Judges. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) says that in the evidence of the witnesses before the Committee, and in the action of the Rating Authorities, there is more or less of uniformity, and I may agree with him, but in the sense that there is more of the less and little of the more. There is in the evidence an extreme divergence of opinion as to what is and what is not rateable. The right hon. Gentleman finds underlying the Bill the principle of taking off from those now rated a large portion of their liability. I repudiate that argument altogether. The intention of the Bill is not to declare off from rateability that which is now liable, but to guard against the increasing liability which seems to be threatening us in the future. The hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Williams) has referred to the fact that in that city a successful plan has been adopted which avoids all litigation by assessing the motive power, including machinery, at 50s. per horse-power. Will it be surprising to the hon. Member to know that in Yorkshire, without pretending to assess machinery in that way, that is the very charge made so that all the arguments used as to the immense difference between Birmingham and other districts come to nothing! It has been said that the exclusion of machinery would raise the rates in Birmingham from 6s. 8d. to 6s. 9d.; but the fact is, that the adoption of the assessment of 50s. per horse power, as in Yorkshire and other districts, would cause the continuance of the rates exactly as they are now. It appears to me that the incidence of the taxation under the plan adopted in Birmingham must be very unequal, because there must be a great difference in the value of machinery adapted to different purposes, and, in some cases, you will have heavy and inexpensive machinery included at the same rate as delicate and intricate machinery in other cases. It is quite clear that limitations and definitions are, more or less, attended with difficulty, but, notwithstanding the argument of the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken, the Bill defines by an easy and feasible method what shall be the limits of rateability, and, I think, these limits are fixed on the general principle that freehold inheritances shall be assessed, and that machinery and chattels shall be exempted. In the case of Insurance Companies, this discrimination is made between the inheritance and machinery and chattels. The line of demarcation in the Bill follows that laid down in Section 5 of the Bills of Sale Act, 1878, where all that is to be regarded as part of the heritage is set out and described in three classes, and the division in that Act is identical with the terms of the Bill now before the House. It is a happy coincidence that the Bill of Sales Act, which draws a limit between what are chattels and what is attached to the heritage, should be identical in terms to the delimitation which is proposed in this Bill. I think that if the Bill be defeated and the practice with which we are now threatened on the part of the Rating Authorities is continued, we shall not be able to stop even at the very broad line which is laid down by the Tyne Boiler case. We shall never arrive at any principle until we decide that all chattels shall be rateable, because it seems to me that if in the case of a mill the machinery in it is to be rateable, so in the case of a restaurant or hotel all the appointments ought also to be rateable, and in the case of a residence all the furniture, and in the case of a farm all the agricultural and farming implements. It has been said, in opposition to the Bill, that machinery ought to be made rateable because it reduces manual labour. If, by the introduction of machinery into a manufactory employing 1,200 hands, 200 are thrown out of employment, it is hard upon the 200, but still the 1,000 are greatly benefited, inasmuch as they may have their employment assured to them for a longer period than they otherwise would. Those who are practically acquainted with manufacturing know that the repair and renewal of machinery—the keeping up with the times—is a source of very great expenditure and diminution of profit to the manufacturer. It is, indeed, essential for the supremacy of the industry of this country that the machinery used should not have added to it any additional embargo or burden. I hope, therefore, this Bill will be passed, and the country, and manufacturers in particular, will be relieved from the uncertainty which now attaches to the condition of the law.

(4.5.) MR. WALTER JAMES (Gateshead): As the representative of an important constituency in the North of England which will be largely affected if this Bill passes into law, I must say I cannot quite see why I should support it. The case relating to the Tyne has been mentioned in the course of the discussion, and no doubt there has been a considerable opposition from that quarter to these proposals which have, for many years, been before Parliament. The Bill was brought in last year, and I thought it my duty, at a quarter before 6 o'clock one Wednesday evening, to intercept its further progress. I think my action caused some little annoyance to my hon. Friend the Member for the Cirencester Division (Mr. Winterbotham), but I imagine that, after the great divergence of opinion which has been expressed this afternoon in regard to the provisions of the Bill, he will agree with me that it is hardly a Bill the Second Reading of which ought to be passed without discussion. The two chief cases which have been referred to were not cases prompted by the valuation of the Local Authorities; but I think that some 15 or 16 years ago there was a general feeling in the North of England that many of the large manufacturing industries which had contributed so much to the prosperity of the district had not contributed their fair share or quota to local taxation. Now, the only point which I, as a layman, regard as of great importance is, that if you shift the burden as suggested, you, to some extent, break faith with the Local Authorities. These sums of money, which have been raised on the security of the rates, you will take from one interest and give to another. That appears to me a very important point, and I ask the Government, when they come to speak on the Bill, to give special attention to it. It is clear that if you shift the burden from the shoulders of the manufacturers you put it, in great part, on the shoulders of the small property owners. Take the case of my own constituency. If you diminish the rates you add to the wages of the working classes. That is all very true, but I hope the House will remember that there is one thing which is necessary to the workman in addition to his wages, and that is his home. These property owners are the owners of the houses of the working classes, and if you burden the owners with taxation you diminish, materially, the comfort and prosperity of the working classes. The rates in my constituency are extremely high—as much as 6s. in the £1, and if the property owners feel themselves burdened with increased taxation no improvement need be expected in the homes of the people, and the probability also is that the rent will be increased. I do not think that this is exactly the time for a change of the kind proposed. Certainly, so far as the North of England is concerned, this is not the time for the initiation of this kind of legislation. If anyone will go down the Tyne upon one of the penny steamers and notice the prosperity of the districts, he will quite understand the point I am urging. I think that the aim of this Bill should be taken into account when the whole question of valuation comes to be dealt with by the

Government. That will be the time when this exceedingly complicated question can most properly be dealt with by Parliament.

*(4.10.) MR. STANSFELD (Halifax): I am sure the House will admit that we have had a most interesting and instructive debate, and it occurs to me that the time is approaching when we may ask the Government for some expression of opinion. I cannot but express my great regret at the absence—I fear on account of indisposition—of the President of the Local Government Board. We know he is familiar with all these questions, and we are aware that he always approaches questions of this kind in a wise and impartial spirit. But I am reconciled to the fact of his absence by the knowledge that the Secretary to the Local Government Board is present, who has displayed his ability on many occasions, and who is backed up by a Department which is second to none in the State for its industry and capacity, and which is particularly fitted to advise upon legal points its representatives in this House. Now, the case for the Bill is the uncertainty of the law. I cannot agree with the hon. and learned Member for Staffordshire (Mr. Staveley Hill) that there is no uncertainty in the law, nor can I admit that the judgment of Lord Esher in the Tyne case is free from doubt or difficulty. The hon. Member for Cirencester (Mr. Winterbotham) has spoken with his usual vigour and clearness, and the hon. Member for Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth) has justly urged, in support of the Bill, the uncertainty of the law and the still greater uncertainty in the practice. We have a superabundance of evidence on that subject. The practice differs, we have been told, in Manchester and in the immediate neighbourhood of Manchester. The hon. Member for the Gorton Division (Mr. Mather) told us that within four miles of his works there are manufacturers who are subject to a rating which he escapes, because the Assessment Committees interpreted the law in different ways. That is an inequality and an injustice which ought to be remedied. The hon. Member opposite (Sir W. Houldsworth) told us, and he apparently spoke with authority, that many Rating Authorities are waiting for the decision of the House upon this measure, and that if the measure is rejected the immediate consequence will be a crop of excessive assessments, which will lead, no doubt, to further inequalities, and further injustice and litigation. Let me point out to the House a practical inequality. I have referred to it in the case of Manchester and neighbourhood. But we know that the law in Scotland differs from the law as it is being interpreted and extended in this country. The law in Scotland is, practically speaking, the same as the proposers of this Bill wish the law in England to become. But we have been told by the hon Gentleman (Sir W. Houldsworth) that he believes the law in Ireland is also of the same character as is now desired. So far as we are at present informed the fact is, that in Ireland and Scotland manufacturers are at an advantage, and will be at a still greater advantage in the future than manufacturers in England, unless the Bill is passed. I do not like the notion of legislation by judicial decision. If it is brought home to us that the condition of the law is uncertain, and works with inequality and injustice, I maintain we are not doing our duty if we say we will not interfere in the matter, but leave it to the parties affected to fight the question out in the Courts. The evil of the present state of things is admitted, and, therefore, Parliament ought to set to work to find a remedy. In passing, let me say that this Bill is supported by a variety of large interests in different parts of the country. The hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. J. P. Williams), who opposed the Bill, is understood to speak in the name of Birmingham, but only to-day I learned that the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce supports the Bill. Now, there are two methods of dealing with the evil. One method is to pass a general Bill laying down the principles of rating applicable to all hereditaments or properties, and the other is to pass such a Bill as this. I do not think it is worth while entering in detail into the question of the difference of opinion amongst the Members of the Committee of 1887, but I think it well to point out that while

my right hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) proposes to-day—

> "That this House, whilst believing that the Bill affords a basis for an equitable system of assessment in cases of industries depending mainly upon fixed motive power, is of opinion that the difficulties of defining a satisfactory principle of valuation for the purpose of assessment generally are so great as to render it desirable that the matter should be dealt with as part of a comprehensive scheme of local taxation."

In Committee, on the 28th of June, he admitted, in a Resolution he moved, that it is clear from the evidence that the system acted upon by valuers in different parts of the country has varied considerably, and that the practice in many cases will be materially affected in the future. The right hon. Gentleman recommended legislation, and I find that, on the same occasion, a Motion was carried, with the right hon. Gentleman's assent, that it is desirable that, in the meantime, the various Rating Authorities should not depart from the present system of assessment. My right hon. Friend really wanted the Assessment Committees to hold their hands, but I want to know how is he to get them to hold their hands if they get hold of the judgment of the Master of the Rolls. I ask the Government whether they are prepared to at once bring in a general Bill dealing with the principles of rating as applicable to all the subject matter of rateability? I do not imagine they are. If they are not, I contend they will undertake serious responsibility if they decline to avail themselves of this opportunity of legislating in this particular instance. Certainly I do not see why the Government should object to the Second Reading of this Bill, seeing that they would retain absolute freedom of action in Committee. They know perfectly well that this is not a Party question, and I believe that, in Committee, we may be able to shape the Bill so that it will be generally acceptable, and at the same time redress a considerable and growing grievance.

*(4.30.) THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading of this Bill expressed regret that the task had not fallen into abler hands. Similarly, owing to the regretted absence of the President of the Local Government Board, I may myself be allowed to express my own regret that the task of replying on behalf of that Department on this question has devolved upon me, for it is admitted, both in the discussion we have had to-day and in the evidence given before the Select Committee, to which reference has been made, that this is one of the most difficult and complicated questions it is possible to ask Parliament to decide. I hope that if I make any reference to remarks that have been made in this House or to evidence which has been given before the Select Committee on the part of the manufacturing interest—which may seem almost impertinent as coming from a man who has no practical experience of the industries affected—hon. Members will acquit me of desiring to offer more than legitimate criticism of the views advanced on both sides of the House in relation to this question. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, and who has made one of those fair and kindly speeches which he is accustomed to make in this House, was good enough to invite me to tell the House what the opinion of the Department is as to the legal question. Well, I do not approach the task of giving expression to a legal opinion with any great amount of satisfaction. We have had a legal argument to-day, and the hon. and learned Member for Staffordshire (Mr. Staveley Hill) has given the House the benefit of his legal opinion, and told it that the law has not been altered by recent decisions. The opinion of the Department is that there has not been a variation in the law, but that there is evidence to show that there is some variation in the application of the law. But what have been the arguments addressed to the House in support of the Second Reading? They have not been based upon grievances already existing. No long list of cases has been given in which manufacturers have been unfairly rated. No manufacturer has ventured to say that manufacturing

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industry has been depressed in consequence of unfair or undue rating. The hon. Member for the Gorton Division of Lancashire (Mr. Mather) has told us that the manufacturers appear here to-day, not so much as men of business, but rather as philanthropists desiring the good of those with whom they are connected. Well, I am quite certain every word the hon. Member said is absolutely true. I am convinced that the manufacturers desire that their workmen shall in every way be properly housed and properly treated; but still I have a suspicion that with the manufacturers, as with the agriculturists, the question of profit does sometimes enter into their calculations. Hon. Gentlemen who support the Second Reading have not spoken of the manufacturing industry as suffering under grievances at the present time. What they tell the House is, that the result of certain decisions is that Assessment Committees and Rating Authorities are about to effect a change which will do great injury to manufacturing industries in the future. Witnesses on the side of the Rating Authorities said before the Committee of 1887 that they had not increased the rates, but that if Parliament did not legislate on the subject they would increase their assessments. But now we are in 1890, and not one of the Gentlemen who have addressed the House, and who are fully competent to speak on the subject, has produced an instance of direct hardship or injustice existing at present. [" Oh ! "] Well, I have heard of the Chard case, in which it was said that injustice was done. What has happened? The machinery has been rated, the owners have appealed, and I have just heard that the appeal has been over-ruled to-day. No instance of injustice has been alleged. All that hon. Gentlemen ask the House to believe is that there is a fear which operates injuriously to manufacturing interests, and that unless Parliament interposes injury will be done. Evidence has been adduced to show that there are different rules, which operate differently in different parts of the country, and that, so far as I have been able to understand, is the chief reason which has been advanced in favour of legislation. But let me remind the House of what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby told us a short time ago. He said that this question of rating was by no means confined to machinery. Any hon. Gentleman who examines the assessments of his own county will find the most incomprehensible differences in them. I think there is a great deal to be said for the principle that if the House is to take up this question of assessment it ought rather to deal with those who are admitted to be suffering under great difficulties than with those who, to judge by their representatives, cannot be regarded as otherwise than prosperous. [" Oh ! "] An hon. Member behind me disputes that statement. I have not yet heard that manufacturers, as a rule, allege that they are suffering from bad times, or are depressed in the same degree as the agricultural interest all over the country. The right hon. Gentleman invited the Government to support the Second Reading, and assured us that if we do so he will give us his personal assistance in improving the Bill. But it would, undoubtedly, be a very difficult, if not impossible, task to amend the Bill in Committee so as to make it a fair compromise between the two contending parties. Speaking for those not connected with manufactures, and for the Government, I can say that they do not desire, in the slightest degree, to do anything unfair to the manufacturing interests, nor do they wish that the matter should be turned into a question between town and country. What they desire is that justice should be done, whether to the manufacturing interests or other interests. But the differences between the parties are very acute and hardly reconcilable. The manufacturers have laid down what they believe to be the right basis of rating. There is a party, with representatives in this House, on the other hand, who say that the result of the application of the definition of rating contained in the Bill would be that the manufacturers would get a benefit over the rest of the community. We have heard from the hon. Member for South Birmingham that in Birmingham the difference would be a sum of £8,000, which would be an increase to the rates of upwards of 2d. in the £1.

Mr. P. J. WILLIAMS: Over 1d. What I stated was that the difference would be between £7,000 and £8,000, or an addition to the rates of about 1½d. in the £1.

*Mr LONG: I meant to say upwards of 1½d. in the £1. The evidence from Birmingham is sufficient to show that if the definition in the Bill is to guide the Rating Authorities, and those Authorities are to adopt what the manufacturers regard as the fair basis of assessment a great upset in the assessment of the whole country must result. It must be manifest to all that if in Birmingham £7,000 or £8,000 is written off the rates, that amount must be provided from other sources. Hon. Gentlemen, in supporting the Bill, assure the House that concessions made to the manufacturing interest will tend to the benefit of the industrial classes, and not to the benefit of the manufacturers. If this slight impost, by means of assessment, is removed by the Bill, I have no doubt that hon. Gentlemen who are manufacturers will give the benefit of the relief to their workpeople; but it should be borne in mind, at the same time, that if this relief is granted to the manufacturer, it has to be met by some other class of property. What would be the class of property upon which the burden would fall in those particular districts? It would be the property of the industrial classes, in whose interests the House is asked to pass the Bill as it stands. It seems to me, personally, so far as I am able to understand what the legal rulings on this question have been, that the law as laid down by the Master of the Rolls is the law which has been generally accepted and acted upon ["No, no!"] and which may be justly described, in the words of Lord Justice Lopes, as decisions which "were founded on good sense, and are good law." Hon. Members have appealed to the representatives of the labour interests to support the measure, and they have told us agriculturists of the terrible things that will happen to us if we do not pass it. One hon. Member on the other side has told us that unless a Bill of this kind is passed, our ploughs and harrows—and I suppose he would go on to say our spades and forks also—will eventually be rated. That may or may not be the case. It will be time enough for us to be alarmed when a practical suggestion is made to carry that out. So far, no one has seriously contemplated that rating should go down to the harrow or the plough, because they are implements which go to the cultivation of the farm, and they have no relation to the assessment of the farm, which is fixed on the basis of rent, rent being fixed according to the productive power of the land. A farm is let as a going concern, without a plough or a harrow on it. The difficulty in this case is to define what are tenants' fixtures. That would be the difficulty we should have to face in Committee on this Bill, and we should find it very hard to arrive at a compromise which would be satisfactory to both parties. The difficulty seems to me almost an insuperable one. ["No, no."] I am only giving my opinion for what it is worth.

*Mr. WINTERBOTHAM: The hon. Member is mistaken. This question is settled every day. Fire Insurance Companies invariably divide machinery into two categories—landlords' machinery and tenants' machinery. The whole of the machinery cannot be insured in one sum.

*Mr. LONG: I hope that if the Bill is read a second time, the difficulty will be overcome with as much apparent ease in the House of Commons. It is, however, a difficulty which hon. Gentlemen will have to face, and I think it will be very hard to arrive at anything like a compromise satisfactory to the two contending parties. As was pointed out by the hon. Member for Manchester, who seconded the Second Reading of the Bill, the question is a most complicated and difficult one. The hon. Baronet (Sir William Houldsworth) told us that, so far as he is concerned, he should be prepared to accept any fair Amendment which would not interfere with the real objects of the Bill. That is all very well so far as it goes. The difficulty will be to arrive at what are practical and fair Amendments which would properly give effect to the general wish of the House. It has been alleged, and I do not deny it, that there is a want of uniformity in the practice with reference to assessments all over the country.

But it has been said by those opposed to the measure that the law on the subject is perfectly clear and has been continuous, and that no change has been made by any recent decision. It appears to the Government that there is undoubtedly a very great divergence of opinion in the House on the merits of this question. It is a matter, however, which the Government think ought to be decided by the House itself. They cannot express their approval of it. Many are opposed to the principle of contracting the area of rateability or to any change which will have the effect of throwing increased burdens on other kinds of property. The Government feel, however, that evidence has been adduced pointing to a want of uniformity in the practice of rating, and it is for the House to say whether or not Parliament shall legislate at once on this portion of a greater question. I hold that if the House deals with the question of assessment it should deal with it as a whole. If, however, the House is of opinion that legislation is urgently necessary, and accepts the Second Reading of the Bill, then it will become the undoubted duty of the Government to ask that the next stage of the Bill should be postponed, and that an opportunity should be given to us to consider what Amendments we ought to propose. I shall support the Amendment of my right hon. Friend, not because I wish to create or perpetuate an injustice which presses on the great manufacturing industry, but because I believe this question of assessment should be dealt with as a whole.

*(5.0.) Sir HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): The view many hon. Members of the House entertain on this question is that a practical difficulty has arisen which, we think, ought to be removed. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Local Government Board has said that he declines to be a party to any limitation of the liability to rating that now exists, but can the hon. Gentleman decline to be a party to a mere definition of what ought to be rated? I may be told that such evils as exist have prevailed for a very long period, and that there is no pressing necessity for legislation. But I would remind the House how the present practical difficulty has arisen. In former times the Rating Authorities had certain broad rules placed before them for their guidance. They were told to seek for that which was fixed to the freehold, that which is the landlord's fixture and not the tenant's, and to rate that which is fixed to the land and to omit to rate that which is moveable. These were the principles on which they proceeded. By degrees, however, those landmarks of the past have been encroached upon, and now these encroachments have so much advanced that none of the landmarks remain, and few practical men are now acquainted with the principles that ought to guide them in making assessments. The principle that has been laid down in the case so often quoted is, no doubt, legally sound, but the difficulty is that it is very difficult to know how to apply it. May I ask the House to listen to what every valuer has to bear in mind? He is told that he is to rate things on the premises which are there for the purpose of making those premises fit for the particular work for which they are used. Valuers apply that principle in different ways. While one valuer may decline to value anything which is not firmly fixed to the freehold, another may include the vice upon a bench as something which makes the premises more valuable for the trade for which they are carried on. The result is that one system of rating exists in one place, and another in another. The question the House has to consider is whether or not it will deal with this anomalous state of things, and secure that there shall be one uniform system of rating. This is a practical difficulty which must be dealt with some way or other. The question to be determined by the House now is not whether cranes or weighing machines shall be exempted from rating. This question can be dealt with in Committee when we reach the sub-section which defines what shall be the subject of rating. But there is no wisdom in leaving every valuer to exercise his own authority and interpret for himself this somewhat ambiguous rule. These are the facts which have lead some of us to support this Bill. We do not pledge ourselves to the details. We ask simply that the Legislature shall bear the responsibility of determining what shall be rated and that the point shall

not be left in that state of uncertainty which is very disastrous to commercial interests.

(5.8.) SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I object to the Bill as a nibbling at a very important trade question. When the right hon. and learned Member speaks of the encouragement afforded by recent legal decisions to Rating Authorities to rate machinery, I venture to think there must be some error, because the dicta of the Judges, whose Judgment has been quoted, themselves afford a refutation of the idea. Each hon. Member who has addressed the House in support of the Bill appears to have done so from a different point of view. One hon. Member told us that the Bill was only a declaration of the existing law, and that it made no change; but another hon. Member asserted that the Bill was necessary to prevent the extinction of manufactories in this country; yet not a single instance has been alleged in which the existing law, as interpreted, has caused, or is creating, any difficulty whatsoever. Of course, we have had a series of gloomy, forbidding, and dreary pictures of possible distress laid before us as likely to arise if the Bill is not allowed to pass into law. But I would like to point out that the decision of which hon. Members have made so much was delivered so far back as the year 1886, and that in the four years that have since elapsed none of the difficulties which they are prognosticating have arisen. The real object of the Bill is that property which has been declared to be legally rateable should no longer be rated. It is a Bill which will have the effect of withdrawing from the area of rating something that is at present liable to rates. It is a Bill advanced by one particular interest, and by one class of men; and it has nothing to do with the greater question of the inequality of rating. Anyone who is acquainted with the present system of rating knows that it is full of inequalities and injustices, and that it requires extensive amendments; and I venture to lay down this proposition—that a matter so intricate, so difficult, and affecting so many interests, is one which ought not to be dealt with in an accidental, haphazard private Member's Bill, but that it is of sufficient importance to be dealt with in a Government measure. It has been argued as if the Bill were something entirely new; but, as a fact, it has been before the House year after year since 1885, and each year it has been brought forward by one of the leading manufacturers. I do not complain of manufacturers taking that line; but when we are told that the Bill is being advanced from philanthropic motives, I think we should bear in mind what class of property it is designed to remove from the area of rating. Reference has been made to the fact that, unless the Bill is passed, large mills might become unoccupied, and that our national industries would suffer. I would like to know if there are not at the present time large areas of land which, in consequence of the inequalities of rating, are unoccupied and waiting the hand of the toiler. If the argument is applicable to manufacturers it is also applicable to the case of landowners, and it only strengthens my point that the question is one that should be dealt with as a whole. I contend that the Bill cannot, by any possibility, do any good. It will not settle the law, and the hon. Member for Manchester, in speaking on it, did not attempt to deny that it would require many alterations. The Scotch Law has been quoted; but I would like to know if the Bill will assimilate the English with the Scotch, or even with the Irish Law. I venture to assert that it will do nothing of the kind. But what it will do will be to relieve large manufacturers of a burden which will be thrown upon the poorest class of householders, who are already sufficiently heavily burdened. The Bill will intensify existing injustices instead of simplifying or settling the law, and under these circumstances I feel compelled to vote against its Second Reading.

(5.19.) THE EARL OF CAVAN (Somerset, S.): The hon. Gentleman who spoke for the Government said that no case of hardship had been made out. Now, the case of Chard has been frequently alluded to in this debate, and there undoubtedly a case of great hardship exists. A man bought some works for £4,300 and also paid £1,500 for the machinery. He then put £23,000 into the business and acquired a large quantity of new machinery under the belief that the same system of assessment would continue, when suddenly he had the new assessment sprung upon him. I have letters from three or four other manufacturers complaining that the new assessment presses very hardly upon them. We hope the House will agree to the Second Reading of this Bill not only because it deals with individual cases, but because it will enable manufacturers in England, as in the case of Scotland and Ireland, to know what their rating will be.

*(5.21.) MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I regret that time does not permit me to submit the case of the mining industries with which I have been this day intrusted; but I wish to ask the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill if, providing the Bill is read a second time, he will in Committee exempt coal mining machinery from the operation of the Bill?

*MR. WINTERBOTHAM: Certainly, Sir.

(5.22.) The House divided:—Ayes 239; Noes 87.—(Div. List, No. 51.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

SLAVERY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 150.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 220.)

As amended considered; Amendments made; Bill read the third time, and passed.

DIRECTORS' LIABILITY BILL.—(No. 60.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, &c.

MOTIONS.

RATING AND VALUATION (SCOTLAND).

(5.35.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Law relating to the rating and valuation of the various kinds of property subject to assessment in Scotland, and to report what amendments may be necessary therein; that the Committee do consist of Seventeen Members; that Mr. Baird, Mr. J. B. Balfour, Mr. Barbour, Mr. Joseph Bolton, Mr. Caldwell, Dr. Cameron, Sir Archibald Campbell, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Mr. Hugh Elliot, Sir Archibald Orr Ewing, Mr. Hunter, Colonel Malcolm, Mr. M'Ewan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Shaw-Stewart, Mr. Mark Stewart, and Mr. Edmund Robertson, be Members of the Committee; that the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records; that five be the quorum; that the Report and Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee of Rating and Valuation (Scotland), in Session 1888, be referred to the Select Committee on Rating and Valuation (Scotland)."—(*Mr. E. Robertson.*)

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS (St. Augustine's, Kent): I object on the ground that the hon. Gentleman has not ascertained whether the Members he has named will or can serve on the Committee, it being usual to obtain the consent of hon. Members before nominating them.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I would point out that this is merely an old Committee to which the hon. Gentleman has himself assented, and to the re-appointment of which I assume there can be no objection. Moreover, the Lord Advocate has consented to the re-appointment.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I simply consented to the re-appointment of the Committee, but not to the inclusion of the same names as on the old Committee.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: May I explain that this Motion is precisely similar to that of last year, which was assented to by the Government.

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: There is no objection to the appointment of the Committee; but there are some of the Members of the old Committee who will not be able to serve on this, because they have already been appointed to serve on other Committees.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Then I beg to move the first part of my Motion.

Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the law relating to the rating and valuation of the various kinds of property subject to assessment in Scotland, and to report what amendments may be necessary therein.

Ordered, That the Committee do consist of seventeen Members.

Ordered, That the Report and Minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee on Rating and Valuation (Scotland), in Session, 1888, be referred to the Select Committee on Rating and Valuation (Scotland).

TOWN HOLDINGS.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Committee do consist of Nineteen Members; That Mr. Arthur Acland, Mr. Amherst, Mr. Baumann, Mr. Beadel, Mr. Channing, Mr. Crilly, Mr. Stormonth Darling, Sir John W. Ellis, Mr. Elton, Dr. Fox, Mr. Lewis Fry, Mr. Knowles, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Macartney, Sir William Marriott, Colonel Nolan, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Seale-Hayne, and Viscount Wolmer, be Members of the Committee; that Five be the quorum; that the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records; that the Minutes of Evidence of 1888 and 1889 be referred to the said Committee."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I would point out that there is only a single Scotch Member nominated on this Committee. I therefore object to the Motion.

Colonel NOLAN: If the hon. Member will withdraw his objection we will assent to the addition of one or two Scotch Members.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw his objection?

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Yes, Sir.

Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That the Committee do consist of Nineteen Members.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Arthur Acland, Mr. Amherst, Mr. Baumann, Mr. Beadel, Mr. Channing, Mr. Crilly, Mr. Stormonth Darling, Sir John W. Ellis, Mr. Elton, Dr. Fox, Mr. Lewis Fry, Mr. Knowles, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Macartney, Sir William Marriott, Colonel Nolan, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Seale-Hayne, and Viscount Wolmer.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That five be the quorum.

Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence of 1888 and 1889 be referred to the said Committee.—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) BILL.

Return ordered—

"Of Advances and Repayments under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' and the several Land Acts of 1870, 1881, 1885, and 1888."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 125.]

IRISH CHURCH TEMPORALITIES FUND.

Return ordered—

"Showing the financial position of the Irish Church Temporalities Fund in the event of the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill becoming Law."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 130.]

TRUST COMPANIES BILL [LORDS.]

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 225.]

IRELAND—THE LAND PURCHASE BILL.

On the Motion for the Adjournment of the House,

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant whether the Papers that have been granted with reference to the Land Purchase Bill are all that are to be issued?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): No, Sir; they are not the whole of the Papers. Those that have been already granted show the operation of the various loans under the Land Act of 1868-9, and to-morrow will be issued further Papers containing tables illustrating the working of the Bill, the amount of the Guarantee Fund, and the present position of the Church surplus.

THE CASE OF MR. GARDINER.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the charge against Mr. Gardiner has been withdrawn? It is a disgraceful scandal.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I know nothing whatever about the matter.

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 17th April, 1890.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, That the Committee have added the Lord Kinnaird and the Lord De Ramsey to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c., for the consideration of the Open Spaces Bill. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BILL.

A Bill to regulate the adoption of children—Was presented by the Lord Chaworth (*E, Meath*); read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Friday the 25th instant. (No. 56.)

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 57.)

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 17th April, 1890.

QUESTIONS.

INDIA FACTORY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the present position of the India Factory Act Amendment Bill; and whether, having regard to the Resolutions adopted by the recent Conference at Berlin, in relation to the employment of women and children in factories, Her Majesty's Government is prepared to sanction the provisions of such a measure as that proposed by the Government of India?

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham): I have also to ask the Under Secretary for India whether he has seen the statement in the *Times* Calcutta telegram of March 30th—

> "That the Factories Act Amendment Bill has been postponed till next winter, the Government being of opinion that there is no pressing necessity for the measure;"

and, whether any information has been received at the India Office to show that this is the real reason for the postponement of the Bill?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The India Factory Bill has been postponed by the Council in India till the receipt of replies from the Local Governments and Administrations. The Resolutions of the Berlin Conference will be transmitted by the Secretary of State to the Government of India, and will no doubt receive due consideration from them before the Bill is passed into law. No such statement as that referred to by the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean) has been made by the Government of India to the Secretary of State. The reason given by the Government of Bombay for postponing the Factory Bill is that they are awaiting the receipt of replies.

MURDER OF A BENGALI AT DUM DUM.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table of the House the proceedings in the High Court of Calcutta, including the trial and the hearing on appeal, in the case of a soldier named O'Hara, charged with the murder of a Bengali at Dum Dum; and whether he will consent to the Return relating to Murders in India, which stands on the Paper this day?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State is not in possession of any proceedings in the case of O'Hara, which can be laid on the Table; and he is advised that, in criminal cases, proceedings of the kind suggested in the question do not exist. The Secretary of State cannot consent to the Return asked for; it is in some respects impossible, as, when a murder remains undetected, nobody can tell whether it was committed by an European or not. Information as to the number of murders reported to the police, and the number of persons convicted, is to be found in the Statistical Abstract. The further information for which the hon. Member asks, could only be collected, if at all in India, at a cost which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, would be indefensible.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether any communication has been made to the Secretary of State in reference to the trial and appeal in the case of the soldier charged with the murder of a Bengali?

*SIR J. GORST: I must have notice of that question. I can only say that no communication has been made that I am aware of; but if the hon. Member will give notice, I will inquire.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): From the military aspect of the case, would the inquiry be undertaken by the Government of India, or by the Commander-in-Chief?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE CROPS IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the detailed Reports of the district officials of Madras respecting the condition of the crops in Southern India, which crops were expected to be very short owing to the deficiency of rain, have been received by the Secretary of State; and whether he will lay them upon the Table?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State will be happy to show the hon. Member all the Reports received up to the 22nd of March, which is the latest. They can be made a Parliamentary Paper, if the hon. Member desires. But the rains of the end of December happily removed all cause for apprehending serious scarcity, and there has been no scarcity, though crops are below the average.

PROSPECTS OF AGRICULTURE IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES AND OUDH.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State can give the House any information respecting the state and prospects of agriculture in the North-West Provinces and Oudh; whether he is aware that the wheat crop has greatly suffered, and that, even reckoning land under canal irrigation, it is anticipated that there will not be a two-anna (or one-eight) yield; whether prices of good grains are already rising in the United Provinces; and whether fears are entertained of great scarcity, if not of actual famine?

SIR J. GORST: In reply to the first paragraph of the question of the hon. Member I have to say that the latest Report—that for the week ending March 19—shows that the hill district of Humaon was the only one in which a serious failure of crops was reported. My answer to the second paragraph is that the anticipation of March 12 was that the wheat crop would be two-thirds of the average. The answer to paragraphs 3 and 4 is in the negative. Of 18 central markets noticed in the Report of March 19 the price was stationary at six, rising at five, falling at five, and unsteady at two.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Indian Councils Bill, which stands as the fifth Order of the Day, will be taken?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): It will certainly not be taken either this week or next.

THE AMENDMENT OF THE INDIAN FACTORY ACTS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the letter in the *Times*, of 10th April, from Mr. Holt S. Hallett, relative to the Amendment to the Indian Factory Acts, wherein he quotes the Report of Mr. Meade-King relative to the effect of factory work at an early age upon Indian children:—

> "Nothing has impressed me more in the course of my inspection of the Bombay mills than the unhealthy, stunted, and puny appearance of a great number of the children whom I have seen at work;"

whether his attention has been drawn to the evidence of Mr. Drewett, which was laid before the Factory Commission, regarding the ginning factories in Khandesh, wherein he states that—

> "The women sit on the back of the gins, and have simply to lift up the cotton and push it forward. I have often seen them doing this mechanically, three-parts asleep. I think you will find that the women had worked night and day for as long as a week at a stretch. I do not think there is a double set of children any-

where, and they must also have worked day and night. The women would have worked 23 out of the 24 hours;"

and whether the Government of India are taking any steps to check the abuses reported?

Sir J. GORST: The Secretary of State has had his attention directed to the evidence as to the condition of women and children in Indian Factories. The Factory Law Amendment Bill, now before the Indian Legislature, will, to some extent, deal with the existing evils, and will, in particular, bring the ginning factories referred to in paragraph 2 of the question for the first time under legislative restriction. The proceedings of the Berlin Conference will be considered by the Government of India in reference to these matters before the Bill is passed into Law.

IRELAND—EMPLOYMENT OF MILITARY AT EVICTIONS.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the total extra cost arising from the employment of military at, or in connection with, evictions in Ireland, during the three years ending 31st March, 1890?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The total cost arising from the causes referred to for the period stated was £2,675.

COST OF EMPLOYING POLICE AT EVICTIONS.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the total extra cost arising from the employment of the constabulary at, or in connection with, evictions, or in the protection of caretakers, during the three years ending 31st March, 1890?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): The Constabulary authorities report that the books of the Department do not contain separate entries of the costs connected with the duties referred to in the question; and an investigation for the purpose would involve such considerable labour and serious loss of time as to render it inexpedient in the public interest.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a Return was granted in 1888?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes; and the preparation of that Return involved so much labour that I could not ask the Department to repeat it. The labour in preparing a Return for three years would be enormous.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Before going into Supply upon the Constabulary Vote, will the right hon. Gentleman give all the information necessary to enable the Irish Members to discuss the Vote?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Will the hon. Gentleman specify what he wants?

Dr. TANNER: I want the whole of the information.

Mr. HUGH GRAHAM, J.P.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any complaints have reached the Lord Chancellor of the conduct of Mr. Hugh Graham, J.P., of Rahoney, Dromore, County Tyrone, accusing him of drunkenness, and threatening to assault a passenger in a railway carriage, on the 27th of March, 1889; of being under the influence of drink while giving evidence in a Land Court, on 23rd January, 1889, when Mr. Justice Litton had him removed from Court by a policeman; and of being on another occasion drunk at the Omagh Railway Station, and annoying ladies, when a policeman who was asked to arrest him refused on the grounds that he was on railway premises; and whether the Lord Chancellor has inquired into these allegations, and with what result?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that the case of this gentleman is still under the consideration of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

POST OFFICE AT CORDUFF.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will cause inquiry to be made as to the necessity for a post office at Corduff, County Monaghan, which has a population of 400 families, with chapel, schools, and dispensary, and is situated in a populous district of country, and several miles from a post office?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): The subject to which the hon. Member refers has been carefully inquired into, and I regret to find that the correspondence which would benefit by the establishment of a Post Office at Corduff is so small in amount as to preclude me from acceding to the request. The nearest Post Office to Corduff is at Corvally, two and a half miles distant, and the Postal Service in the neighbourhood is now conducted at a loss to the Revenue.

ABBEYFEALE PETTY SESSIONS.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that, at a Petty Session Court, held in Abbeyfeale on the 26th ultimo, before Messrs. Turner, R.N., and W. C. Harnett, J.P., a case of alleged trespass, at suit of James Esmonde, J.P., against Mrs. Harnett, was called, the plaintiff not appearing; that the defendant applied for an adjournment in consequence of the absence of his solicitor, but was refused; and that, after all the other cases had been disposed of, the Magistrates kept the police and officials of the Court waiting the arrival of Mr. Esmonde, and then heard and adjudicated upon the case, although Mrs. Harnett had been refused the adjournment; and if he will cause an inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the case?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that the case had been already adjourned at the previous Petty Sessions, and as it involved no question of difficulty the Magistrates refused to further adjourn it. They accordingly proceeded with it upon the arrival by train of the plaintiff, who had come a distance of upwards of 80 miles to give evidence in the matter.

In reply to a further question by Mr. W. ABRAHAM,

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said there was only a delay of about a quarter of an hour.

RAILWAY IN DONEGAL.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Grand Jury of Donegal have agreed to a baronial guarantee for the working expenses of a line of railway from Stranorlar to Glenties, through the town of Ballybofey; whether such guarantee includes the area of that town; whether representations have been made to the Treasury that such a line running through the town will rather injure than serve it, unless provision is made for a station there; and whether the Treasury will take steps to secure that this shall be done?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Representations have been made to me on this subject, which will be carefully considered before any final action is taken.

POSTMASTERSHIP OF LETTERKENNY.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the vacancy in the Postmastership at Letterkenny has yet been filled; what the allowance for office rent is to be; what are the numbers of the assistants, established and unestablished, and their respective salaries; and whether there is any difference in the work done by them?

*MR. RAIKES: No appointment has yet been made to the Letterkenny Post Office, but I hope to be able to make one shortly. An allowance will be granted for office rent; but the amount of it cannot be fixed at present—depending, as it does, upon the arrangements which the new Postmaster may make. The established force will consist of three members on scale, rising from 12s. to 30s. a week. There will also be two assistants, unestablished, at £30 a year each. Between the work done by the established and unestablished force there is, no doubt, a difference; but what this difference is in the particular case of Letterkenny, the shortness of the notice has not admitted of my ascertaining. If I can obtain any information, I will furnish the hon. Member with it.

LAND COMMISSION PURCHASES.

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many acres of land in Ireland have been purchased by the Irish Land Commission under Clause 5 of "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885;" what amount has been expended by the Land Commission in purchasing the same; how many acres have been sold by the Land Commission under the above clause, what amount has been realised for them, and what number of acres so purchased does the Commission still hold; what is the number of acres and purchase value of holdings resumed by the Land Commission from tenant purchasers under Clause 3; and how many of these have been re-sold to fresh purchasers, and at what price?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners report that under the powers referred to in the first paragraph of the question, 19,817 acres have been so purchased, the purchase money being £152,117, which also represents the amount for which the lands were re-sold by them. The Commissioners do not possess any portion of the holdings. As regards the inquiries in the two concluding paragraphs, the hon. Member appears to be under a mis-apprehension. The Land Commissioners do not resume possession of holdings from tenant purchasers. If, however, there be default in the payment of instalments for a holding, it is put up for sale by the Commissioners, subject to the future instalments payable in respect of the original purchase-money. Since the passing of the Act in 1885, loans have been issued in upwards of 12,000 cases, and in 12 cases only has there been default in the payment of the instalments.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the last part of the question.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Under what I apprehend to be the conditions referred to by the hon. Gentleman the number re-sold of the 12 is nine, and three are still unsold.

LANDED ESTATES COURT.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will lay upon the Table a Return of Irish Estates in the Landed Estates Court for sale, showing the location of each estate, the name of the landlord, the rateable valuation, the actual present rental, the highest offer made in each case in which there has been any offer of purchase, and the period for which each estate has been in the hands of the Court?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Registrar to the Land Judges reports that it would not be practicable to give the proposed Return.

In reply to another question by Mr. Sexton,

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said: I only received the information which I have just given since I entered the House, but I will be glad to make further inquiries.

COMPLAINT AGAINST PRISON OFFICIALS.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has caused any independent inquiry into the allegations of Mr. George Harrison against the officers of Pentonville, Millbank, and Chatham Prisons, made to a representative of the Press, and reported on the 29th of March; and, if so, whether he will communicate the Report to the House?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have caused inquiry to be made by the Visiting Director into all the allegations which have been attributed to George Harrison in the Press, and he has reported that they are devoid of foundation. I do not propose to lay this Report on the Table, but I will show it to the hon. Member, if he wishes it.

WILFUL MURDER.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, in the 10 years from 1879 to 1888 inclusive, there were in England and Wales 1,766 verdicts of wilful murder found by Coroners' Juries, 672 persons committed for trial, 373 acquitted or found insane, 299 condemned to death, 154 executed, and 145 sentences of death commuted; and whether, looking to the disparity between the numbers of committals and convictions, and between the numbers of capital sentences passed and carried out, as compared with committals, convictions, and sentences for other crimes of violence, the Government will, in this or next Session, introduce a measure either for the abolition of capital punishment, or for otherwise amending the law relating to punishment for wilful murder?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; the figures are correctly given. Of the 145 cases where the death sentence was commuted, 30 were crimes of infanticide by women. It is not the intention of the Government to introduce any legislation in the direction indicated by the hon. Member.

FACTORY ACTS—CARDIFF.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if any steps have been taken to enforce the Factory Acts (Clause 16, 41 and 42 Vic.) in Messrs. Vaughan's works at Cardiff; if he is aware, that during the recent dispute, Messrs. Vaughan, and Co. supplied food to the women and girls at work on the premises, and that last Good Friday the women worked at this establishment to 12 o'clock; and if he would see that in future the Factory Acts are enforced in this establishment?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; the Factory Acts are being enforced at the dye works of Messrs. Vaughan, and I am not aware that they have been infringed. The facts referred to in the second paragraph took place at the laundry works of Messrs. Vaughan, which are not within the Factory Acts. The hands in the dye works had both Good Friday and Easter Monday as holidays. The dye works have been regularly visited by the Inspector for years.

OLD CROSS BONES BURIAL GROUND.

MR CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the use made of the unconsecrated "Old Cross Bones" Burial Ground, in Union Street, Borough, closed in 1854, and from which the human remains have not been removed; whether he is aware that the property was sold by auction by the parish in or about the year 1886, and that since that date it has been constantly used for the following purposes, namely, penny circuses, switchback railways, waxworks and ghost shows, steam roundabouts, &c., accompanied by steam and other organs, rattles, drums, bells, and steam shriekers; and whether any existing Authority can prevent the landlord from letting the property for these purposes; and, if not, whether he will take steps to legislate in the direction of giving powers to put down this and similar proceedings?

MR. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; my attention has not been called to this matter, otherwise than by the question of the hon Member. I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the property was sold to a private individual by the Trustees of the parish, and that it is used for the purposes referred to by the poorer classes, who conduct themselves in an orderly manner. It is a question of law, as to which I can give no opinion, whether the temporary erections referred to are buildings within the meaning of the Disused Burial Grounds Act, and it is left to the Local Authority or to private individuals to proceed by indictment for nuisance. The County Council are the Authorities under the Act of 1884, and I think any representation on the matter should be addressed to that Body.

MR. CAUSTON: The London County Council have proceeded against the tenants, but when a conviction takes place the tenant retires, and another takes his place; I want to know whether there is any way by which we can get at the freeholder?

MR. MATTHEWS: I cannot venture to express an opinion upon a question of law like that.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP INSPECTORS.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to statements in the Press, notably in the *Manchester Guardian*, to the effect that the Government are about to throw open the appointment of Factory and Workshop Inspectors to open competition, and whether this is intended to prevent the further appointment of workmen inspectors?

MR. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; I have not seen the statements in question. The existing scheme for the examination of Factory Inspectors is now under revision, but the changes in contemplation will not have the effect of preventing the appointment of working men candidates in the future. It is not intended to throw open these appointments to open competition.

OFFICERS' SWORDS.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the recent detention at Queenborough, by the vigilance of Her Majesty's officers of Customs, of a case of swords marked with a British crown and the words "Royal Scots Lothian Regiment," but subsequently released upon "Manufactured in Germany" being pointed out hidden under the hilt; if the swords were imported for the officers of Her Majesty's First Regiment of Foot; if he can state the name of the importer; and whether, having regard to the dangerous failure in the Soudan of foreign weapons in the hands of British soldiers, and the importance to the nation of the lives of the Queen's officers in battle crises, they are free to equip themselves indiscriminately from abroad, or if colonels of regiments are responsible to the Military Authorities for the proper arming of the officers under them?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: The facts are as stated by my hon. Friend in the first paragraph. It is presumed that the swords were imported for the officers of the Royal Scots, but the War Office has no information on this point. The importers are Messrs. Hartjen & Co., of No. 4, Falcon Street, E.C., and I understand that the Board of Customs has informed them that the country of manufacture should be more conspicuously marked in future. Officers of the Army and Navy provide their own swords, and they are at liberty to buy them where they please.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): Does the same rule apply to revolvers?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: Yes, Sir; the officers provide their own revolvers.

PAYMASTER SERGEANTS.

Mr MACDONALD CAMERON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, with reference to his statement, last year, that there was no intention of altering the status of paymaster sergeants and orderly room sergeants appointed to the permanent staff of the Militia before the 1st March, 1888, whether it is the case that orders have recently been issued directing that such non-commissioned officers be not permitted to continue in the Service beyond 21 years, no matter what their age may be; and, if so, whether such orders materially alter the status of men whom the Militia Regulations permit to serve until they attain the age of 50 or 55 years, according to the time they joined the permanent staff of the Militia?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: There are three descriptions of paymaster sergeants and orderly room clerks now serving in the Militia—(1) those who are completing their Army engagements of 21 years; (2) those who have completed such engagement and are allowed to continue serving; and (3) pensioners and militiamen serving on five-year renewable engagements. The appointment of paymaster sergeants and orderly room clerks in the Militia have been abolished, but there is no intention of interfering with the engagement under which men are now serving. Such engagement, however, will not be renewed except where it is for the good of the Service, and when specially recommended.

MILITARY COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION.

Mr. DONAL SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state now when the result of the last Military Competitive Examination for Commissions in the Army for Subalterns of the Militia, held on the 19th and 20th of March last, will be communicated to the candidates?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: It is hoped that the result of this examination will be notified to each candidate, by post, on Saturday next. There were 318 candidates, and as the competition is a very close one, the papers have to be most carefully checked.

THE LADIES' GALLERY.

Mr. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, seeing the keen interest taken by ladies in the proceedings of this House, and the eager but often ineffectual attempts of Members, by the daily ballot, to obtain seats for them in the Ladies' Gallery, it is within the resources of architectural skill to enlarge the space within which the ladies are at present encaged, so as to provide more equal accommodation for strangers of both sexes; and whether there is any good reason for caging off the Ladies' Gallery, and so obstructing the view which the ladies would otherwise have of the House and its proceedings?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, University of Dublin): I am sorry to say that, owing to the structural conditions of that part of the House wherein the Ladies' Gallery is situated, it is not possible to enlarge it as the hon. Member suggests. As to removing the grating, that is a burning question which has often been raised and debated, and has always been decided in the negative, very much, I believe, because it has been ascertained whenever inquiry has been made that, though some of the ladies who visit the Gallery complain of being "encaged" as the hon. Member puts it in his question, the feeling of the majority is decidedly against the removal of the grating.

DR. TANNER: As this is a burning question, is there any chance of its being melted down?

MR. PLUNKET: It is called a grill now.

THE SUBMARINE TELEGRAPH TO THE CONTINENT.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the purchase of the submarine telegraphs between England and the continent has resulted in a financial success; and whether he is in a position to give the approximate expenditure and the receipts of this Service from the period of purchase up to date?

*MR. RAIKES: It is difficult to attach a precise meaning to the words "financial success," as employed by the hon. Member, but I think I am justified in saying that the result of the acquisition of the submarine cables between this country and the continent may, on the whole, be described as satisfactory. In view of the approaching International Telegraph Conference, it would be contrary to the public interest to make any official statement at present respecting the details of this question.

Mr. Leng

NON-DELIVERY OF TELEGRAMS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that a telegram handed in at Bournemouth, on 22nd February, addresssd to a mercantile firm in Glasgow, was never delivered, and that the Department, on 2nd of April, admitted that the non-delivery was due to carelessness on the part of one of the telegraphists; whether he is aware that a loss of about £90 resulted from the non-delivery of the telegram; and if he can explain why the Department offered 7½d., being the amount prepaid by the sender of the telegram, as the only compensation, and whether any increase can be made on that offer?

*MR. RAIKES: I regret to find that the failure of the telegram referred to was due to carelessness, and to learn from the hon. Member that it was attended with such serious loss. The Department has no power to grant compensation for loss incurred through the non-delivery of a telegram. All it can do is to refund the cost of the telegram and endeavour to prevent similar mistakes. Punishment is always inflicted on the person in fault.

THE SCOTCH MAILS.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the 8 p.m. mail from London to Scotland does not arrive in Wick until 5.30 p.m. next evening, in Thurso until 6 p.m., and in Kirkwall until 12 p.m.; and whether he is prepared to take such steps as will enable the mails to reach Wick at 3.30 p.m. and Kirkwall at 8 p.m., so as to enable merchants and others in those remote towns to peruse their correspondence and reply to it by next morning's south-going mail?

*MR. RAIKES: The facts are, no doubt, substantially as stated in the hon. Member's question; but, while fully appreciating the importance of the matter, I should not be justified in incurring additional expense in accelerating the Highland Mail Service, the cost of that Service being already very great. I am, however, giving very careful attention to the subject, in the hope that a way may be found of acceding to the wishes expressed, without adding to the charge on the public purse.

PARCEL POST WITH THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if any steps are being taken to bring about the establishment of a Parcel Post between Great Britain and the United States?

*Mr. RAIKES: Yes, Sir. For several years active steps have been taken to bring about a Parcel Post with the United States, but hitherto without success. Negotiations, however, have recently been renewed, and I am not without hope of a satisfactory result.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS—SALE AGENCY IN WALES.

Mr. ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the Government will appoint a publisher in Wales, say at Cardiff, for the sale of Parliamentary Papers, Bills, Acts of Parliament, and other Government publications; and will cause the name of the publisher for Wales to be set forth on the imprint of all such documents, along with the names of the publishers for England, Scotland, and Ireland?

Mr. JACKSON: Sale agencies for Government publications of all kinds have been granted, after competition, to three firms for 10 years from January 1, 1887, the rights of the one firm extending to England and Wales together, the others respectively to Scotland and Ireland. So long as these contracts run it is impossible for the Government to grant a fourth contract for sale agency in Wales, but I am not aware of any inconvenience to inhabitants of the Principality, resulting from the present system, which would necessitate the establishment of a separate agency for Wales. Monthly lists of the Parliamentary Papers are exhibited in the chief post offices in Wales, including Cardiff, with order forms for the use of the public.

BROMPTON CEMETERY.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, considering the great increase of property and population in the neighbourhood of Brompton Cemetery, Government will agree to close it, as proposed in 1884, and will hand it over as a disused burial ground to the London County Council, with due regard to the vested rights of interested persons, and to the policy of the Extramural Interments Act.

Mr. JACKSON: The Treasury is advised that it is not necessary, on sanitary grounds, to close Brompton Cemetery, and as there is a present income of £6,000 per annum derived from the cemetery, I am not prepared to advise that it should be closed on other grounds.

GOVERNMENT COPYRIGHT IN BLUE BOOKS.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if it is true, as stated in the public prints, that the Government have claimed a copyright in Blue Books, and given notice that in this respect Her Majesty intends to stand upon her rights, and insist that those who wish to republish the contents of Blue Books should not do so without permission; and, if so, whether the Government will reconsider this matter, and, instead of restraining, will facilitate and encourage the action of all who are willing to circulate in a popular form the useful matter presented to Parliament, without regard to the profit of Queen's Printers or other purveyors of official books?

Mr. JACKSON: The opinions of the Treasury with regard to the enforcement of the copyright in Government publications are given at length in the Minute of August 31st, 1887, which was presented to Parliament on September 13th of the same year. (House of Commons Paper, 335-87.) If the hon. Member will refer to that Paper I think he will see that there is no need to reconsider the matter.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I will take the first opportunity of raising the question in the House.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether lands adjacent to crofter's holdings, propelled or conveyed since the passing of the Crofters' Acts by a proprietor to his eldest son and apparent heir, are thereby no longer liable to be taken for the enlargement of the holdings of the adjacent crofters?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute.): If by any *bonâ fide* disposition lands have been conveyed by a proprietor to another person since the passing of the Crofters Act, I do not consider that such lands could be deemed available land under the provisions of Section 13 of the Act.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is legal, or in accordance with the Local Government (Scotland) Act, for Parochial Boards to choose, as their representatives on District Committees of a County Council, men who, not being electors for such county, are not qualified to be elected Councillors?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: This is a question of statutory construction; but my opinion is that Parochial Boards are at liberty, if they see fit, to appoint representatives who are not qualified to be county electors.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS ACT.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps have been taken by the Board of Trade in respect of Section 6 of "The Regulation of Railways Act, 1889?"

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The Board of Trade informed the Railway Companies that they proposed to fix the 1st July next, as the date from which every passenger ticket is to have the fare printed upon it. The Board propose to adhere to that date, as a rule, but where there is any real difficulty, they will grant an extension to the 1st January, 1891, but not beyond that.

LIGHTHOUSES IN SCOTLAND.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is true that at present there are no lighthouses on the west coast of Orkney; and, if so, whether he is prepared to recommend their erection?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The only light on the west coast of Orkney is the light on Gremsa Island in Hoy Sound. The south-west coast is, however, guarded by lights on the north coast of Scotland and in the Pentland Firth. As to the erection of further lights, I beg to refer the hon. Member to my reply of the 28th March, 1889, to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland, and to state that since that date no proposals for the lighting of Orkney have been submitted to the Board of Trade; but I ought to add that the present financial condition of the Mercantile Marine Fund will not justify me in sanctioning such a proposition, if made.

THE TRAMWAYS ACT.

MR. THOMAS HENRY BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Government will consent to the appointment of the proposed Select Committee, with reference to "The tramways Act, 1870," provided the inquiry contemplated is restricted to the tramways in the Metropolis and the neighbouring districts, and that it is understood that any legislation recommended by the Committee shall be of a metropolitan character?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I am not aware of any sufficient reason why the tramways in the Metropolis and the neighbouring districts should be dealt with separately from tramways in other parts of the United Kingdom.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman realise the fact that next year the valuable rights of the people of London will be insufficiently provided for if there is no legislation in the meantime?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I am not aware that there is any absolute necessity for immediate legislation.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman cause inquiry to be made? Both the London County Council and the Tramway Companies see the necessity for legislation in the matter.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The Tramway Companies look at the matter from quite another point of view. They want advantages for themselves of another kind.

BERLIN INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government is in possession of the Report of the proceedings of the Industrial Conference at Berlin; and when the same will be laid before Parliament?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): All the Protocols of the Labour Conference at Berlin have not yet been received; but those in our hands are in course of translation, and the whole will be presented as soon as possible.

PORTUGUESE EXPEDITION UP THE SHIRÉ.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any, and, if so, what, information has reached the Foreign Office as to the despatch of a Portuguese Expedition up the Shiré to attack Mponda, and in reference to which the *Times* correspondent at Zanzibar states that telegrams confirming the report have arrived from Delagoa Bay?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: Reports as to the alleged objects of the expedition were telegraphed by Her Majesty's Consul at Mozambique, and Her Majesty's Minister at Lisbon was at once instructed to communicate with the Portuguese Government on the subject. The Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that the Portuguese Government had no official knowledge of the expedition, but, on hearing that it was rumoured, had instructed the Governor General of Mozambique, if the statement was true, to order the Commander immediately to retire behind the Ruo. We have received a further positive assurance that no fresh action on the part of the Colonial Authorities in the Shiré inconsistent with the understanding between the two Governments would be sanctioned or tolerated.

THE BOULAK MUSEUM IN EGYPT.

Mr. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been called to an attempt which has recently been made by three Europeans to set fire to the famous Boulak Museum in Egypt, which contains objects of priceless value for the history of art and of early man; and whether the Government can see their way to putting some pressure on the Authorities in Egypt to secure that these objects shall be housed in some building less liable to be burnt down than the Palace in which they are now contained, and for their better custody and protection. I also wish to have an answer to a question put some time ago whether the Egyptian Authorities are taking any means for the protection of monuments which have been recently much destroyed by travellers in the Nile Valley? My right hon. Friend said that he would inquire of Sir Evelyn Baring and inform the House.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: No information has yet been received as to an attempt made by three Europeans to set fire to this Museum. On February 9, Her Majesty's Agent and Consul General reported that the transfer of the Boulak Museum to the Palace of Ghizeh had been effected with complete success, and that there could be no doubt that the ancient Egyptian monuments had been placed in far greater security and would be seen to far greater advantage than had hitherto been the case.

THE REV. Mr. DOBIE.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now state the circumstances attending the imprisonment and release of the Rev. Mr. Dobie, at Hodeidah?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I am not yet able to give a reliable account of the circumstances, as the statements of Mr. Dobie and the Turkish Local Authorities are so much at variance that Her Majesty's Ambassador has found it necessary to call for further particulars from the British Vice Consul at Hodeidah, Ata Muhamad; when they have been received his Excellency will make a further Report to Her Majesty's Government.

DOCKYARD *EMPLOYÉS.*

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if it is the case that males of from 18 to 20 years old are employed as boys in Her Majesty's Dockyards;

what are their wages; and are these boys put to do skilled work, such as drilling, driving steam cranes, machines, &c.?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): Boys are employed in the Dockyards up to the ages of from 18 to 20 years in connection with most of the principal trades. Their pay at 20 years of age would be 2s. 6d. per day. These boys are entered for the purpose of learning trades, and are employed on skilled work with that object. Great pressure is put upon the authorities at each Dockyard to enter boys and teach them trades, and it is a frequent source of complaint that more are not entered, as the sons of workmen have very few other opportunities of learning trades in the Dockyard towns.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have received any Petitions from the labourers employed in the Dockyards for an increase of pay, these having been presented to the local officials in February, who promised that they should be forwarded; if it is a fact that ordinary labourers are paid 15s. per week, and whether the Admiralty have any intention of raising this minimum to the £1 per week asked for by the labourers; and whether the Admiralty propose to redress the grievances complained of, namely, in the matters of checked pay, low wages, and with a view to boys being employed on boys' work and not on skilled labour?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: The Petitions have been considered, and regulations issued, for a more rapid advance to higher rates of pay. These labourers have opportunities of becoming skilled labourers and earning 20s. per week and over—if they show themselves fit for better work. It should be borne in mind that far more men are anxious to be entered at 15s. per week than we could find employment for.

THE *MALABAR* TROOPSHIP.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is a fact that there were 14 funerals on board the *Malabar* troopship during her last home voyage; that she carried 200 invalids at starting, and 300 by the time she reached Malta; and whether the numbers on board were in excess of Admiralty Regulations?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: Fourteen deaths did occur on board the *Malabar* during her last homeward voyage. Excluding officers and ladies, 644 invalids were embarked, but the term "invalid" includes not only men in the last stages of organic disease, but also those who have ailments which render them unfit for service only, and who are otherwise in health. The numbers embarked were not in excess of those allowed by the Regulations, but the number of invalids embarked is settled by the Military Medical Authorities at Bombay, who alone would be in a position to decide upon the proportion of sick that it would be safe to embark at one time.

CHATHAM DOCKYARD.

MR. EDWARD KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Rochester): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is a fact that the men employed upon task work in Her Majesty's Dockyard, Chatham, are complaining of being checked, and for what reason are the men checked 10 and 20 per cent. of their earnings when engaged upon task work? I have also to ask whether it is true that complaints have been made to the Admiral Superintendent of the manner in which the measurers take the men's work, and of the prices paid for the same?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: A few complaints were made about three months ago that men were not being paid, in some cases, the full amounts earned. This was at once looked into, and it was found that deductions had in a few instances been made by the measuring officers; but this was stopped, and orders were sent by the Controller to each yard that no alteration of the rates or prices paid for work should be made without the approval of the Superintendent. The result of establishing task work has been very beneficial to the workmen, as it has enabled the workmen to earn 22 per cent. above their ordinary wages, and every care will be taken in developing the system to see that the men are adequately paid according to the work they perform.

H.M.S. *BARRACOUTA.*

Mr. HERBERT KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the expression of regret by the Coroner's Jury in the recent *Barracouta* case at Sheerness—

> "That the Admiralty had not carried out the recommendations of the Jury in the *Thistle* explosion in 1869, by providing hospital accommodation for injured men at Sheerness, and thus caused the necessity of sending cases to Chatham;"

whether he is aware that there is already at Sheerness a Military Hospital which is never full, where cases of accident could be treated; and whether he will take immediate steps to put an end to the unnecessary suffering caused by the present arrangements?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: My attention has been drawn to the rider to the verdict of the Coroner's Jury. Since the *Thistle* inquiry the Admiralty have made such further arrangements as seemed desirable. Increased accommodation has been provided at Sheerness Naval Barracks for cases of accident, and a vessel has been specially fitted for the proper transport of injured men, when deemed fit, to Chatham Hospital, an important establishment, where patients receive greater comforts than could be afforded locally. The Army Hospital of 36 beds at Sheerness is considered to be sufficient only for military requirements, but in the event of the Naval Infirmary at Sheerness being already full of serious cases, any naval patient who might not be in a condition fit for removal to Chatham would, no doubt, be accommodated in the Military Hospital if there were a bed to spare. No unnecessary suffering is now caused, as every precaution is taken to prevent it, and only such men as are considered by the medical officers on the spot as fit to be removed and as likely to benefit by the change are sent to Chatham.

Mr. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN: In consequence of the answer of the noble Lord I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the subject.

BECHUANALAND AND CYPRUS.

Sir GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there are obtainable by Members of Parliament a statement of the expenditure and income of Bechuanaland, and a statement of the expenditure of the Government of Cyprus?

*The UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE for the COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, East Toxteth): As regards British Bechuanaland, the right hon. Gentleman will find information relating to previous years in the Blue Books, C5,363, pages 12 and 13, and C5,620, pages 24 to 28. The estimated expenditure and income for the financial year now current are given at page 429 of the Civil Service Estimates, Class V. As regards the expenditure of Cyprus, the right hon. Gentleman will find detailed information in the Blue Books, C5,523 and C5,812. The Annual Estimates of Cyprus have frequently been printed for Parliament in full, and those for 1888-9 will be found at pages 69 to 86 of C5,523. As the details and totals are almost the same from year to year they have not since been reprinted.

THE CENSUS OF 1891.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when it is intended to introduce the three Bills making provision for the Census of 1891?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman must have failed to have observed that the question he has raised was answered last Tuesday. When the Committee at present sitting has reported the Government will consider the course to be pursued.

JOHN DALY.

Mr. SEXTON: Can the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary say now how soon the evidence in the case of John Daly will be in the hands of Members?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have heard from the prison visitors that it will be sent this week.

WOOLWICH AND ENFIELD FACTORIES (*EMPLOYÉS* AND OVERTIME).

Address for—

"Return, showing the total number of men employed in Woolwich Arsenal, and also in the Small Arms Factory at Enfield; the number employed in each Department, and in each branch of Trade; the extent to which Overtime (not including Night Shifts) has been worked during each of the last two years, namely, from the 1st day of March, 1888, to the end of February, 1889, and from the 1st day of March, 1889, to the end of February, 1890, respectively; and the number of men working Overtime in that period (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 206, of Session 1888)."—(*Mr. Howell.*)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRADE, &c.

Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Trade, &c., have leave to print and circulate with the Votes the Minutes of their Proceedings from day to day.—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

EAST INDIA (FINANCIAL STATEMENT).

Address for—

"Copy of the Indian Financial Statement for 1890-91, and of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor General thereon."—(*Sir George Balfour.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Sixth Report brought up and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

David Lloyd-George, Esquire, for Carnarvon Borough.

COMPANIES (MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION) BILL. (No. 114.)

Bill reported from the Standing Committee on Trade, &c.

Report of the Committee, with Minutes of Proceedings, to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 133.]

Bill, as amended, to be taken into Consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 226.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

*(4.20.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Mr. Courtney, once more I have the great satisfaction of being able, in presenting the National Balance-Sheet, to show that it balances largely on the right side. Once more the absence of costly expeditions or small wars has relieved me from any of those sudden inroads on the national resources which have so often marred the fairest prospects of Chancellors of the Exchequer. Again no events have occurred to put any extraordinary expenditure upon us, while, on the other hand, a steady increase of prosperity has caused those Estimates which prudence dictated to be exceeded in the result. The Estimates of Revenue have been attacked as having been put too low. Those Estimates I am prepared to defend, but as regards Expenditure I think all Parties in the House will acknowledge that the figures are most satisfactory. The Paper which I have had put in the hands of hon. Members will show that the estimated expenditure has not been exceeded by more than the very trifling sum of £116,000. I am relieved on this occasion, I hope, from the somewhat dreary necessity of wearying the Committee with many explanations of details with regard to excess of expenditure or savings, by the fact that the Estimates have been, on the whole, so extremely accurate. The aggregate result is this—I estimated for an expenditure of £85,967,000; the Exchequer Issues for the year were £86,083,000, or £116,000 more than the estimate. As the Committee are aware, there have been some Supplementary Estimates on the one hand, while on the other we have been compensated by savings; but there is not one item on which I need touch. The ground I have to cover is very broad indeed, and I hope the Committee will excuse me if I do not go more into detail than is absolutely necessary, or more than they have a right to demand. I ask the Committee in passing to note the fact that on an

aggregate Expenditure of £86,000,000 we have been right within £116,000. I do not believe there is any private establishment, or any great Railway Company, or any company of any kind, that could have forecast its expenditure in a more business-like manner than has been done by the Administrative Departments of the State. I think that the financial officers of the various Departments deserve great credit for this result. I think the heads of these Departments deserve credit for having so controlled the expenditure, and I think the Committee will recognise that some credit is also due to my hon. Friend the Secretary for the Treasury, who watches over the Estimates with such care and vigilance. I come now to the Estimates of Revenue. The surplus Revenue which I am able to lay before the Committee to-day does not come from any savings, nor from any cause connected with Expenditure, but from the expansion of Revenue. The receipts have exceeded my estimate by more than £3,000,000. I am bound to say that this has been made a matter of some reproach to me. It has been said that this is "easy finance"; that it is an easy process of securing the popularity of a surplus to depreciate the expansion of your probable Revenue, and so be able to put a satisfactory conclusion before the country at the end of the year. It has been said that personal motives must have induced the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take a gloomy, or too gloomy, a view of the Estimates at the beginning of the year. I have even seen it declared that I must have purposely and wilfully deceived the public in this matter. I shall be able to produce conclusive proof that this has not been the case; I shall be able to produce the most satisfactory proof to all hon. Members on both sides of the House, and, I think, to my censors, that I was perfectly right in the course I took. If I insist on this for a moment, I do not do so as a personal defence—I am not concerned to defend myself very seriously against having a large surplus—but I think a defence is necessary, not so much for one Chancellor of the Exchequer as for the sake of his successors, and for the sake of the public generally. It is utterly impossible to forecast a Revenue amounting to £86,000,000 or £90,000,000 so accurately that you should not be out by a few per cent., and remember that 1 per cent. upon this total of £86,000,000 means £860,000, and that, speaking roughly, an excess of 4 per cent. would be about equivalent to the £3,000,000 which represents the surplus. What we have to do, therefore, is to see that within a very narrow percentage we are able to calculate the proper Revenue of the year. Supposing we were to be less careful as regards the Estimates, what would be the result? If any change took place during the course of the year—and who can say that a change will not take place? — you might from having taken an optimistic view of your Revenue most likely find that you were on the wrong side. I am not prepared to say that it is right for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to treat it practically as a toss-up whether he will have a deficit or a surplus. He must make sure, so far as human expectation goes, that he is on the right side at the end of the year, and I am perfectly confident that right hon. Gentlemen opposite will take the same view as I do in that respect. It is discreditable, unless there are unforeseen circumstances, that you should land the credit of this country in a deficit. I think it may be well to show the public shortly how these Estimates are framed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not get the Estimates placed before him simply in the gross, and then say, "Now the times are prosperous, let us put on a couple of millions." That is not the process at all. Every Department is responsible for the estimates which it places before the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Customs and the Inland Revenue calculate, not only what each Department may fairly estimate for, but they go through every item, and they are anxious that in every item it shall be proved that they have taken a businesslike view, and that there should not be a deficit in that item at the end of the year. I suppose it has rarely happened that a Chancellor of the Exchequer has said to himself that he would underestimate an item which had been put before him by his responsible advisers. The temptation is all the other way. The temptation to a Chancellor of the Exchequer is to avoid the imposition of taxation, when it may seem necessary, by screwing up estimates. That is a temptation into which we may sometimes fall, but there is no temptation to under-estimate your Revenue in order to impose taxation. The phrase has been used of "easy finance." Clearly where you have to impose actual taxation in order to make the Revenue square, personal considerations would point to putting your Estimates high and not to putting them low. If I had put my Estimates higher last year I might have escaped the fierce onslaught that was made upon me by the brewers in consequence of the 3d. addition obliged to be put on the Beer Duty, and in the same way I should not have had to impose the additional £1,000,000 of the Estate Duty. I framed my Estimates according to the best advice I received, and I shall be able to show the House, when I come to consider the details, how those Estimates have been justified. For the last two or three years we have been on the ascending curve of prosperity, and in that case there is nearly always a prospect of some increase of Revenue over your Estimates. But you must take care not to be caught half-way. When a Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks he is still on the ascending curve of prosperity, he may before the year is out have a drop and find his Estimates falsified. We have had some warnings in that respect. Several times it has been believed that we had seen the dawn of a greater prosperity, but in the East people sometimes speak of "false dawns," and there have been many occasions when prosperity seemed to be opening to us and we thought we saw the real dawn, but it has proved to be a false hope. Happily this year we seem to have come upon a greater period of prosperity, and the result is that, in some respects, but in some respects only, the Estimates show a very remarkable elasticity. The House will be startled when they come to consider in detail the cause of the very considerable excess of Revenue over Estimates. Nearly £2,500,000, out of a surplus of £3,250,000, were due to absolutely extraordinary circumstances. The £2,500,000 have been due to an extraordinary rush to alcohol and to an operation in silver which was not contemplated when I presented my Budget last year. The increase in the consumption of alcohol last year, as compared with its predecessor, produced an increase of duty exceeding £1,800,000. Let me remind the House that for eleven years the Revenue from spirits had been declining, and that for two years it had remained stationary. Speaking of forecasting the Revenue, if I had come before this House and had stated that I believed the increase on alcoholic beverages for the year would be £1,800,000, I believe I should have been considered either a lunatic or a libeller of the consuming classes of the country. Let me analyse the details of the Revenue of the past year. I think the House will admit that the figures are interesting. The net receipts from all consumable articles except spirits, wines, and beer actually fell short of my Estimate by, in round numbers, £130,000, surely an exceedingly accurate estimate. The net receipts from these articles—namely, tea, dried fruits, tobacco, and coffee—were £14,488,000, as compared with the Estimate of £14,617,000, and as compared with a net produce in the previous year of £14,468,000. As to alcoholic drinks, I am bound to admit that I have a different tale to tell. The net receipts from all alcoholic drinks amounted to £29,265,000, as compared with my Estimate of £27,430,000 and with a net produce of £27,157,000 in the year before. If I deduct the produce of the change made in the Beer Duty it shows an increase of £1,778,000, which I have roughly called £1,800,0000. The Beer Duty exceeded my estimate by £270,000; the duty on foreign spirits by £421,000; on home spirits by no less than £1,010,000; and on wine by £120,000. It is on drink, and on drink alone, as regards consumable articles, that the Revenue was under-estimated in the past year. I may have been wrong in not foreseeing this increase in the consumption of alcoholic drinks, but I think I should have been wrong in disregarding the previous opinion of every person who has studied the course of consumption during the last few years. The Committee will notice that there has been a universal rush. Some have rushed to the beer barrel, others to the spirit bottle, and others to the decanter.

All classes seemed to have combined in toasting the prosperity of the country in largely increased quantities of alcohol. I call the special attention of the Committee to this extraordinary circumstance—a circumstance which must be deplored by all —and which places upon the House of Commons and the Government an increasing liability to deal with the question of the consumption of alcoholic liquors. A closer examination of the separate items in the list of alcoholic beverages will not diminish the surprise which I think the House and the public will feel. Of all beverages in the world, the one that shows the greatest increase during the last year is rum. I have taken some pains to find out who drinks the rum. I am told the consumption takes place mainly in seaport towns; and London, being a port, has also contributed largely to this extraordinary increase. The consumption of rum has increased by 12 per cent. in the last financial year. British spirits follow with an increased consumption of over 7 per cent. Brandy follows with an increased consumption of nearly 6 per cent., and other sorts of spirits show an increased consumption of nearly 5 per cent. I cannot exaggerate the impression which these figures make on myself. The more you deal with them the more extraordinary they seem to be. I have attempted to ascertain what this consumption of 12 per cent. additional of rum means if reduced to intelligible proportions. I understand that rum is generally asked for in public houses by the half quartern or half gill, both of which mean about one-eighth of a pint. The retailer is allowed to mix water with the spirit as long as it is not reduced to below 25deg. under proof. Taking these facts into consideration, and bearing in mind that the price of a half gill of rum is about 2½d. or 3d., you will see that the rum consumed in the United Kingdom during the year 1888-9, if it was all drunk in this way, was 245,000,000 drams, and that enormous amount has been increased by 30,000,000 drams during the course of the last financial year. I hope the Committee will feel that this is a matter we ought to look fully in the face. We ought to understand not only what 12 per cent. means when you put it in the bulk, but how it works out in detail. It is an extraordinary historical fact that in the year 1875-6, which was the greatest drinking year on record, there was precisely the same rush, in precisely the same proportions, to these different classes of spirits. At that time, too, the consumers of wine followed generally in the wake of the consumers of spirits and beer. So it appears that, notwithstanding all our efforts in the cause of temperance, increased prosperity does not mean an increased consumption of other great classes of articles, but unfortunately has meant, and does mean, a great increase in the consumption of alcoholic liquors. Wine, which had been at a standstill for a few years, last year exceeded by nearly 10 per cent. the amount consumed in previous years. The consumption of beer has increased about 4 per cent., which is considerably larger than the increase in population, although there has been increase of duty. I saw a somewhat remarkable statement coming from a country brewer, who asserted that if the impost was maintained, the quality of the beer would be deteriorated. Whether that is so or not I cannot say, but at all events the taste for it has not decreased. Let me now descend from these stupendous, these sensational figures, into the more ordinary figures of the Budget. If I run through, as is customary, the various items of Revenue, comparing the receipts with my Estimate, there is a decrease of £17,500 on chicory, coffee, and cocoa; an increase on dried fruits of £49,000; an increase of £421,000 on foreign spirits; a decrease on tea of £220,000; an increase on tobacco of £152,000, and on wine of £120,000, the net increase being about £410,000. Coffee and cocoa are as disappointing as they always have been. I do not think we need pay much attention to the case of dried fruits, as that depends so much upon the crops. The deficiency in the Tea Duty is due to two circumstances. It is due in a great part to the transfer of the purchases from China to Indian tea. That accounts for a very considerable amount. But there is also another circumstance, and that is that the traders have refrained from taking tea out of bond during the last two months, owing to the belief—as to the justification for which, at this moment, I will say nothing

—that the duty would be reduced. But taking the Customs as a whole—and I draw attention again to those critics who speak of under-estimating the Revenue—the result is that with an income of upwards of £20,000,000, the total increase is only £400,000, due practically to foreign spirits. Passing now to Inland Revenue, I come to Excise. The excess of Receipts over Estimates is, in the Beer Duty, £270,000; and in spirits, £1,010,000. The Railway Duty shows a small increase of £12,000. In Licences there is a decrease of £32,000. The total receipts from Excise are £24,133,000, as against the estimate of £22,870,000, the increase being entirely due to spirits and wines. I now come to the Death Duties. The Probate, Legacy, and Succession Duties yielded £6,056,000, against an estimate of £5,940,000. The new Estate Duty yielded £784,000, as against an estimate of £800,000. I think, looking at the uncertainty of life itself, it is a remarkable fact that there is no estimate more certain of being proved correct at the end of the year than the estimate framed upon Death Duties. It appears to me to be a extraordinary fact that we are able so accurately to estimate what is really a double sum, namely, the number of people who are likely to die in the year, and the fortunes which they will leave, and I may almost say the manner in which they will leave them. But, taken altogether, our Estimates of the Death Duties have been wonderfully correct. The last item under the head of Stamps is general stamps. This item is more difficult to gauge than any other, because, this being upon the transactions of the living, who can foretell at the beginning of the financial year whether speculation will continue on the same basis as it assumed at that time? It would have been difficult to foresee that the rush for forming companies would have been as continuous as it had been during the past year. There are various circumstances which modify the result from stamps, and there is no more uncertain item in the whole of our Revenue. As the result, I am glad to be able to announce that the increase on the whole of these general stamps was £357,000. It may interest the Committee to know that, as regards the Companies' Capital Duty, which I imposed in 1888, and which, I may say, is paid with marvellous cheerfulness by the sanguine promoters of companies, it amounted to £290,000, against an estimate of £180,000, although I had allowed for an increase of £50,000 over the estimate of last year. It has passed through my mind sometimes whether it might not have been better to have put a tax of 2 per cent. instead of 1 per cent. upon this form of industrial activity. I wish the Committee to note that the chief increase took place in the first three quarters of the year. The general stamps have not been so productive during the last quarter. There has been a check in trade, there have been symptoms which do not point to that increase of transactions which has been so useful to the Revenue during the last year. Therefore, though the total for the year is as satisfactory as I have indicated, I think it will be seen that caution will be required as regards general stamps next year. The receipts from the Post Office have exceeded the Estimate by £100,000—a very close calculation. When hon. Members talk of under-estimating the Revenue, they should remember that no credit is due to me, but that great credit is due to the Post Office Authorities for having been able to estimate a Revenue of £9,000,000 within £100,000. In Telegraphs there is an excess of £90,000 on the aggregate sum of £2,230,000. I have one more item. I said that there were two abnormal causes in the receipts of last year. One was the Drink Bill. I spoke of £2,500,000, which leaves a margin of £700,000. I will explain to what cause this is due. It is a windfall which cannot be expected to recur. It is due to the increased profit of the Mint upon the circulation of silver. Practically, the whole is due to that cause. It could not be anticipated at the beginning of the year, because the action which was taken, and which has brought in a profit of £774,000, was not contemplated at that time. The actual profit derived from silver is £774,000, against an Estimate of £200,000. The Committee will remember that there have been continual complaints of an insufficient silver circulation. On the other hand, there was plenty of silver at the Mint, and at the Bank, and every desire to put it into circulation. But somehow or other the conduit pipes by which it passes into circulation seemed to be stopped. The public wanted more silver; we were prepared to issue it, but something seemed to be amiss. On looking carefully into the matter I found that there was a charge of ¼ per cent. upon the freight of silver from London to the provinces, or a charge of ¼ per cent. made by the Bank of England in respect of the transmission of silver from London to provincial banks. And bankers, having no special interest in supplying their customers with silver, shrank from paying the ¼ per cent., and consequently the silver did not flow. I can almost prove that that is the case by showing what occurred when the hitch was removed. Seeing that it was desirable, as the country wished for silver, to let the country have the silver, I authorised the payment of the ¼ per cent. by the State. It was an infinitesimal sacrifice, but the removal of the charge set the flow of silver free, and has put us in the position of being able to show such a satisfactory result at the end of the year. There was also an increase in wages, which made the moment favourable for an increase in the circulation of silver. I do not think that there have been many complaints that too much silver was put into circulation. On the contrary, I occasionally hear still of the want of shillings and sixpences in various parts of the country. The Committee will remember that it is not the duty of the State to supply people with silver, but that silver must be asked for through the banks, or through the ordinary channels, before it is obtained. There is no State process for the issue of silver except so far as we can pay it out to our own workmen. That is what we have done, to some extent, taking care that there should be no complaint or abuse. We also prevented the increase, to any great extent, of the most expensive coin in the world—namely, the half sovereign. We have been charged with diminishing the amount in circulation of that most useful coin, but we have not diminished the amount. All that we have done is rather to check the fresh issue of a coin on which the annual loss is as great as it is on the sovereign itself. We have made a profit on silver, and thus lightened the work which we have to perform with regard to the withdrawal of light gold. The total amount of silver issued in 1889-90 was £2,304,000. Without being carried into detail, the Committee may like to know the comparison of the total Revenues of the past year with those of its predecessor, in order to see what expansion there has been. Apart from those special causes which I have enumerated, apart from the non-tax Revenue, and making the necessary allowances for the increase in the Beer and Estates Duties put on last year, the result of the comparison is as follows:—The Customs show an increase of £453,000; the Excise, an increase of £1,326,000; stamps—so far as regards the Death Duties—an increase of £354,000; and the remainder an increase of £516,000, which is due to general stamps. The Land Tax and houses show an increase of £44,000, and the Income Tax an increase of £295,000. The total increase is £2,988,000, or, in round figures, £3,000,000. I want to call the attention of the Committee to these figures. In the composition of that sum of £3,000,000 they will observe that the increase in the Customs and Excise receipts counts for £1,800,000, while the increase in what we call direct Revenue, that is, Stamps, has been £870,000, and in the Income Tax £295,000—figures small in comparison to the great increase which has taken place in the amounts derived from indirect taxation. I have now completed, and, I hope, made clear to the Committee, the results of the past year as far as Expenditure and Revenue are concerned. I now put the two amounts together. We allowed for a margin of Revenue over Expenditure of £183,000, and the Revenue exceeded the Estimates by £3,154,000, an excess altogether of £3,337,000. On the other hand, the Expenditure exceeded the Estimate by £116,000, so that the real surplus of last year is £3,221,000. I am also able to make a satisfactory statement with regard to another important part of the finance of the year. I wish to say a few words about the general reduction of the Debt of the State. I suppose the story to be told in that respect will be satisfactory, unless, indeed, there be Members of this House, or of the outside public, who think that money may be better spent than in reducing the enormous liabilities which still lie upon us with regard to our National Debt. We have diminished our liabilities during the last three years, I think I may say, "by leaps and bounds." Last year I was able to inform the Committee that the round sum provided out of taxation for the reduction of the Debt in the years 1887-88 and 1888-89 had been £15,000,000, or an average of £7,500,000. I have more than kept up the average during the past year. I am able to show a reduction in the Debt of upwards of £8,000,000. In the year the Funded Debt was diminished by £20,944,000; on the other hand, the Unfunded Debt was increased by £16,159,000; so that the two Debts together were reduced by £4,785,000. To this total we have to add the diminished liability in respect of Terminable Annuities of £3,510,000, thus leaving the total reduction for the year £8,295,000. We have also diminished our liabilities in other respects. The Savings Bank deficiency is reduced by £260,000. On the other hand the Exchequer Balance, to which I shall have to refer hereafter, is reduced by £270,000; so that the total amount by which our liabilities were reduced last year is £8,200,000. I will also state what will be the amount paid out of Revenue in the last financial year in reducing our capital liabilities, or applicable to that purpose. By Annuities and the Sinking Fund we have diminished the Debt in 1889-90 by £5,062,000. We have further to apply in redemption of the Debt the balance of Revenue over Expenditure in 1889-90, which constitutes the old Sinking Fund of that year, amounting to £3,221,000. So that the total cash applied, or applicable, belonging to 1889-90 amounts to £8,283,000. The amount of Debt which we have reduced in three years is £23,323,000—the largest amount that the Debt has ever been reduced in three consecutive years. This statement, however, is incomplete without an explanation of the position of the balances. Our balance at the commencement of the year was £5,592,000; on March 31 it stood at £5,220,000, or less than at the beginning by £372,000. Yet we received £3,221,000 by the excess of Revenue over Expenditure. This requires explanation. In order to meet the temporary requirements of the War Office and the Admiralty under the Imperial Defence Act, we have temporarily taken out of the balances £500,000 for the War Office, and £337,000 for the Admiralty. We have also taken for redemption and conversion purposes about £1,678,000. We did not fully replace the Exchequer Bills presented for payment by £192,000. We advanced on account of bullion purchases more than we repaid by £150,000. On the other hand, there was paid into the balances, in respect of the Sardinian Loan, £53,000. The Revenue exceeded the Expenditure by £3,221,000. If we deduct this amount paid into our balances from the amount taken out, the result is that we arrive at the £372,000 already mentioned, which is the sum by which our balance has to be restored. It will be seen that the large excess of Revenue over Expenditure has assisted us in the redemption operations, and has enabled us to defray the Expenditure under the Imperial Defence Act without borrowing. Of course, I need not tell the Committee that we do not intend to deplete our balances permanently by the amounts I have mentioned. We shall have to borrow the sums issued under the Imperial Defence Act, in 1888-9 and 1889-90, for the Army and Navy, amounting together to £1,497,000. We shall also have to make good a portion of the money taken out of balances for redemption and conversion purposes. I am sorry to trouble the Committee with these banking details, but these financial statements are sometimes referred to in the future, and it is customary to explain the balances. But it is a somewhat tedious process, and leaving these details, I come to some larger and much more interesting figures. It may be remembered that at the close of the Conversion operations in 1888 we were left with a balance of Three per Cent. Stocks which had to be dealt with in accordance with the notice given in July of that year. The amount of the old Three per Cent. Stock outstanding on November 5, 1888, was, in Consols and Reduced Threes together, £42,325,000. In the course of the next eight months, by the action of the Sinking Fund, the amount redeemed was £1,356,000. Therefore, the amount which had to be specially dealt with was, in round figures, £41,000,000. This was the sum we were pledged to deal with under the Notice of July 6, 1888. I admit it looked a very formidable operation to oblige one's self to pay off £41,000,000, unless they should be converted into new Stock, and as by that time the new Stock stood 1 or 2 per cent. below par, it was doubtful whether any large portion of that £41,000,000 would be automatically converted. I will not say I did not pass through some moments of anxiety. At one time the Money Market made me rather uncomfortable. I will admit that sometimes the large proportions of that sum did cause me some feelings of anxiety; but the resources of the country were so great and its credit was so enormous as to enable me to borrow any sum which might be necessary. The resources of the National Debt Commissioners especially were exceedingly useful. I am now in a position to state how we dealt with the £41,000,000 which has been finally disposed of and wiped out altogether. We paid off in cash £24,378,000, of which the National Debt Commissioners supplied us with £10,800,000; and I had no difficulty in borrowing the remainder. There were exchanged for new Stock by the National Debt Commissioners on the 5th of July, 1889, £8,164,000—an amount which they had bought from their own resources in the course of the year with a view to their conversion into new Stock, and whereby I was relieved from the necessity of paying cash to that amount. There were automatically converted into new Stock on the 5th of October, 1889, £8,426,000. Thus, out of £41,000,000 about £8,000,000 were converted, and the balance of the old Stock, £41,000,000, has now finally and completely disappeared. The Committee will like to know how much the Unfunded Debt in the hands of the public has increased in consequence of the Conversion and Redemption operations. On the 30th of March, 1888, about £14,000,000 were so held, and there are now held by the public about £23,500,000. In other words, our liability towards the public in respect of short or Floating Securities has been increased by £9,500,000. On the other hand, during these two years the Funded Debt has been decreased by £28,500,000; and as the amount of Stocks held by the National Debt Commissioners is larger by £13,000,000 than it was two years ago, our liability towards the public in respect of Funded Debt has been decreased by over £40,000,000. I do not pass away from this subject without offering a tribute of gratitude, not only to the Governor and Deputy Governor and Directors of the Bank of England, who have seconded our efforts with unwearying care, but also to the staff of that establishment, in which these gigantic operations have been carried out without a single hitch, and, as I believe, without a single error and with the fewest possible complaints. I have completed my review, I hope not entirely uninteresting, of the finance of the past year. Before I finally close the history of the last year I wish to state how I propose to deal with the question of light gold. The Committee will remember I stated we had had a windfall in a profit on silver, a sum of from £600,000 to £700,000. I think that nothing can be more proper than to allow the silver to pay for the gold. We propose to establish a Coinage Fund and to credit it with the £600,000. I propose in a few days to introduce a Bill to carry this out. I will just state, what bankers will be anxious to learn, what has happened with regard to the pre-Victorian coins. When it was determined to take these coins in hand it was estimated that there were in circulation 4,295,500 sovereigns and 314,000 half-sovereigns. It was expected that there would be sent in for exchange 2,169,800 sovereigns and all the half-sovereigns; and the cost of renewing these coins was estimated at £50,000, for which a Vote was taken last summer. The amount of coins received by the Bank of England up to the 2nd of April was 2,071,000 sovereigns (nearly the exact Estimate) and 210,000 half-sovereigns. The greater part of these coins has been sent to and weighed by the Mint, and, according to the present calculations, the loss per sovereign proves to be 4·7d., as against an estimated loss of 4·6d., and per half-sovereign to be

6d., as compared with an estimated loss of 5·9d.; and, accordingly, the total deficiency to be made good on the coins presented at the Bank for exchange has been £44,000, against an Estimate of £50,000. I am now able to approach what is a more interesting subject—namely, that of the Revenue and the Expenditure of the coming year. The Committee are acquainted with most of the Expenditure, as I have given the figures of the Expenditure of the coming year in the Paper in the hands of hon. Members, so as to facilitate reference. The total Consolidated Services amount to £28,308,000, being £18,000 more than last year; the addition in the Supply Service, gives a total of £58,319,000, being £568,000 more than the Exchequer itself issued last year, so that the whole calculated Expenditure amounts to £86,627,000, as against £86,083,000, being an excess of £544,000. I have nothing new to say with regard to this Expenditure. The House knows that the chief excess is due to the Army Estimates. The Post Office and Telegraph Services account for £150,000 more Expenditure, but this increased Expenditure is more than compensated for by the estimated increase of Revenue. I ought, perhaps, to say that the Expenditure would be £265,000 larger but for the fact that the Scotch grants have been dropped in consequence of the transfer of Scotch licences to the Scotch Local Authorities. When I come to the licences it will be seen that there is a corresponding or larger decrease, owing to the transfer of these licences to the Scotch Authorities. The House will also call to mind that this is not the total expenditure, because you have to add to the items of expenditure £160,000 in respect of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill, and also £40,000 as representing the gain to which Ireland is entitled in common with England and Scotland, as her share derived from the transfer of licences to the Local Authorities. There is also an Estimate of £30,000, which some hon. Members may have seen, for additional requirements in Bechuanaland. That brings up the total Expenditure to £86,857,000, and that is the Expenditure which we have to meet. Now, I ask the Committee in what spirit am I to approach the Estimates? I have now the duty of framing my Estimates for the coming year. Am I to approach them in an optimistic spirit or to proceed with the same caution which I am blamed for having displayed on previous occasions? I have made many inquiries in many quarters as to the prospect of trade and industry and of general commercial activity for the coming year, and I am bound to say that the answers I have received recommend caution rather than sanguineness. [*Opposition cheers.*] I ask those hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite who cheer that sentiment, to be good enough to remember next year, if I again have to present a satisfactory balance-sheet, that they share at the moment when the Estimates are framed, the temper in which I consider the Estimates ought to be drawn up. Seriously, I think that it would be an error to say that we can prudently count upon a continuance of that progressive prosperity which I trust we may continue to enjoy, and of that speculative activity which has characterised a part of the past financial year. We know that the price of iron has largely fallen, and we know that there has been a check in the shipbuilding trade. We know that the Stock Exchange transactions are not so many; we know that speculation for the moment has calmed down, and though we may hope that the relations between capital and labour, which were so strained at one time during the past financial year, may continue in a state of harmony and concord; still trade is disorganised occasionally by the strikes which take place; and, indeed, I am told that blows have been struck in some parts of the country to industrial enterprise by the unfortunate differences which have taken place. I do not dwell upon that particular circumstance, but I do dwell upon the whole circumstances of the position, and I say that, while I trust we may have prosperous times, we must proceed with caution, because it is possible we may not have that progressive prosperity with which we have been blessed during the past financial year. It is clear that we must look upon the great articles of consumption with caution. As regards tea and tobacco, and the other items, we cannot count upon any large increase. I ask again, then, in what spirit are we to frame the Estimates? As regards alcoholic beverages, I decline to increase the Estimate over the result of the receipts of the past year. I may be wrong. It may be that there will be still a continuance of the increase produced by rum, brandy, and other intoxicating liquors. I will go further, and say that I believe there will be an increase during the next few months in respect of those articles. That is highly probable, but I do not think that such increase will extend over the whole year. When we come to those months where the greatest increase took place last year, I do not think that there can be a cumulative force in this tendency to spend so much of our increased prosperity in augmenting the general drink bill of the country. As regards wages, it is generally true that there is not a decline in the rate of wages directly prosperity begins to flag, and it may be said that you can count for some time upon a continuance of those high wages which have enabled the working classes to consume largely during the past year. But the sum of the wages to be expended does not only depend upon the rate of wage, but upon the continuance of employment of the workmen, and although we may all hope that there may be that continuance of employment, still I say it is in a spirit of caution with regard to the future that I think we ought to act. Let me run through the various heads of Revenue. I have not framed these Estimates in any pessimistic spirit. I will only suggest that it is just possible that we shall only have to mark time. As regards the Customs Receipts on coffee and its satellites, I am not permitted to expect any increase. The history of the past shows that it would be injudicious to do so. In fact, my advisers say that we should estimate about £3,000 less for coffee and £3,000 more for cocoa. On dried fruits I estimate an increase of £14,000. Tobacco, looking at its history for the last two or three years, I estimate to give an increase of £213,000, that is about 2 per cent. on the present importation, while the increase of the population is only at the rate of 1 per cent. As regards tea, I assume that there will be a further transfer from China to Indian and Ceylon tea. I assume that 10,000,000lb. of China tea will be displaced by 7,000,000lb. of Indian and Ceylon tea—a very satisfactory prospect for India, and also a very satisfactory prospect in this respect—namely, that this Indian tea makes so many more cups of tea per pound, in the proportion of ten to seven, so that, practically, tea has been cheapened to the working classes by the displacement by Indian of China tea, if the middleman would only give sufficient influence to this greater cheapness owing to the discovery and development of this great branch of our Indian trade. That diminished consumption of tea is equivalent to about 3,000,000lb., representing a loss of £75,000 in Revenue. On the other hand, we have the fact that tea was not withdrawn in its usual quantities during the last two months of this year in anticipation that the Tea Duty would be reduced. ["Hear, hear," from the Front Opposition Bench.] I hear a smile passing over the face of the right hon. Gentlemen opposite. [*Laughter.*] It was an audible smile. [*Laughter.*] During those two months we estimate that tea was not withdrawn to the amount of £140,000, which, if it had been paid, would have swollen the Receipts of the last year. Now it will come in in the current year. Looking to these two counterbalancing effects, I add about £220,000 to the Estimates. On wine I will take an increase of about £10,000. But spirits, for the reason that I have mentioned, I decline to put at a higher figure than the enormous amount realised last year. In fact, foreign spirits I put at £80,000 lower than the amount received last year, while, on the other hand, British spirits I expect to increase by £40,000, with the reason for which I will not trouble the Committee. The Total Receipts from Customs I put at £20,836,000, or about £375,000 more than last year. I now approach the Excise. Beer has been expanding, and I believe that we are justified in reckoning upon a slight further expansion. I place the Estimate at £9,650,000, which is £240,000 more than the net Receipts of last year. While I have taken off £80,000 from foreign spirits I put on £40,000 on British spirits, putting my Estimate at £13,900,000. The Railway Duty I estimate at £330,000. When I come to the licences, I find that the miserable remnant left me by my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board is still further reduced by £318,000, which I had to take off for the Scotch licences, and I am only left with £220,000 under this head as a source of Imperial Revenue. The total Excise Revenue I put at £24,108,000, against the net Receipts of last year of £24,133,000, or less by £24,000. But for the loss of licences there would be an increase of £286,000. Again, I think the Committee will see that I have proceeded with caution, but not with undue caution, in my Estimates, unless they take a different view from me as regards alcohol beverages. I now pass to the Death Duties and the duties from general stamps. The new Estate Duty last year yielded £784,000, but it did not come into operation at the beginning of the financial year, and, therefore, it will give more in the coming year. I expect to receive £1,070,000 from this source. The Probate Duties I put at £2,400,000 for half the duty; the other half goes to the Local Authorities. Here, again, I must congratulate my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board on the good bargain that was made for his Department. The original estimate of the half of the Probate Duty that we parted with was £2,130,000—that half now is £2,400,000; so that the Local Authorities derive a benefit from the progressive nature of the tax in these two years of £270,000. By a strange coincidence that is the precise amount which the Wheel and Van Tax was expected to realise. The Legacy Duty is put at £2,840,000 as compared with £2,770,000—an increase of £70,000. The Succession Duty is naturally creeping up under the changes that have been made. The proceeds last year exceeded those of the previous year by £144,000. I assume an increase of £100,000 next year, and I put the amount at £1,150,000. Now I come to general stamps, and after the remarks that I have made on the general state of trade, on the position of the Stock Exchange, and the best forecast I can make, I find that I should not be justified in calculating upon any increase of Revenue from general stamps. The general stamps last year amounted to £6,157,000. I take the round sum of £6,140,000 as the general stamps for next year. The total Stamp Duties, including the Death Duties, I put at £13,642,000, as against the Receipts last year of £13,040,000—an increase of £600,000, of course entirely due to the increase put upon the Death Duties. The Land Tax I put at £1,030,000, or less than last year by £18,000, and the House Duty of £2,000,000—an increase of £22,000. I come now to an interesting item—the Property and Income Tax—and there I think I am justified in being more sanguine than I have been with regard to most of the items through which I have passed, because there we have safer grounds to go upon, as we have the advantage of the three years average. My forecast is not only prospective, for I can take a review of the general situation of the last three years, and I find we have now come upon an average of good years and are beginning to get rid of the bad years. That being so I put my estimate at £13,200,000, which is £430,000 more than last year. When I put this before the House last year I said I framed my estimates with some hesitation. I considered I was doing rather a bold thing in putting the yield of 1d. Income Tax from £2,020,000 to £2,100,000. This estimate has been more than justified by the expanding prosperity of the country, and this year I feel justified, from all that I have seen and heard with regard to this source of Revenue, in putting my estimate at £2,200,000, which gives a total for the 6d. of £13,200,000. The vast increase in the proceeds of the 1d. as compared with the estimate put upon it by the late Sir Robert Peel in 1844 of £800,000 will be apparent to the public at large. It denotes the enormous power of this great fiscal engine—the Income Tax—which enables us, by the increase of 1d. alone, to find a source of Revenue equal to upwards of £2,000,000 sterling. As regards the non-Tax Revenue, I have conferred with the Post Office Authorities, and I feel justified in putting my Estimate at £9,750,000, an increase of £300,000 on the Exchequer Receipts of last year. Of course, it is not all profit, though it goes to swell the Revenue. You must deduct the corresponding item of increased charge on the other side. Telegraphs I propose to estimate at £2,470,000, which is £150,000 more than last year. Crown Lands remain the same as before—

£430,000; and the interest on advances I put at £240,000. So far, the Committee will see that I have made good progress. When I come to the Miscellaneous Revenue I lose that profit on silver which I had last year. Stripped of that Revenue, I am not able to put it higher than £2,700,000, which is less than last year by £711,000. The decrease under Miscellaneous Items affects the whole of our receipts from non-Tax Revenue, and the non-Tax Revenue altogether I can only estimate at £15,590,000, as against last year £15,890,000, a decrease of £300,000. If I now add all the non-Tax Revenue and the Tax Revenue together, I get a total estimated at £90,406,000, against the Exchequer Receipts of last year of £89,304,000, which shows that I build upon an increase of £1,102,000. A more interesting comparison is obtained by setting my estimated Revenue against estimated Expenditure. The estimated Revenue is £90,406,000, and the estimated Expenditure is £86,857,000, and I find that I am left with a surplus of £3,549,000, of which I have to dispose. Now, I come to what is, perhaps, as embarrassing a part of my task as if I had to impose taxation, namely, the use of this excess of Revenue over estimated expenditure. I propose, in the first instance, to deduct from this amount the sum which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War tells me he can spend on barracks during the coming year. This brings me to explain how we propose to deal with that matter. The Committee will remember that there is a Bill before the House for spending £4,000,000 on barracks. I have conferred with my right hon. Friend as to how this sum shall be met. We have taken powers in the Bill for borrowing money in future years, but not in the present year. What is wanted this year will come out of the annual Revenue. But as regards the following years and the bulk of the expenditure we shall deal with it on the analogy of the Military Forces Localisation Act of 1872. That Act contemplated barracks, storehouses, and buildings of that kind; and the amount, if I remember rightly, was £3,500,000. The reason then given for proceeding by loan—for under the Act power was given to borrow the whole—was that the Government had incurred at that time a very heavy abnormal charge for Army Purchase. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, speaking at Chester the other day, said—

> "He would not grudge a large expenditure upon barracks, but he hoped resort would not be had to the somewhat cowardly practice of casting the burden on coming years. That had been done before, but it had been done when an enormous expenditure had been incurred out of the Annual Votes upon the abolition of purchase."

But the largest annual Vote under the abolition of purchase was about £900,000, and the heavy annual extra payment incurred last year for Naval Defences was larger than that sum by £500,000, so that we, too, are precisely in the same position as the Government of 1872-3. That is, that we have undertaken this large work for the improvement of our barracks at a time when we are making special efforts in another direction. But the Revenue was as prosperous then as it is now. At that time, too, there was a surplus, and the circumstances are thoroughly analogous. But we do intend to spend such an amount as can be spent this year, out of current Revenue, and therefore I trust my right hon. Friend will not think that we are cowardly in this respect. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War tells me that what he can spend this year is £300,000. I have not asked him to cut down the sum to a minimum, but I asked him to tell me frankly the maximum; and he states that £300,000 will be as much as will be likely to be spent in the present year. One word as to the general charge that some right hon. Gentlemen made against us, that we are having large recourse to borrowing. Whatever may be our plans, at all events up to the present we have not incurred any censure in that respect. We have estimated the Naval Annuity, which amounts to £1,429,000 in every year, over a moderate number of years. But in this first year it has proved, as we knew it would prove, more than enough to cover the expenditure of the year; and, in fact, under the Naval Defence Act we have levied from the taxpayer in the past year about £1,000,000 sterling more than the Admiralty were able to pay out. Therefore, so far from having incurred any debt up to the present, we have paid our way with regard to the naval defences, and have carried a certain sum forward to next year. Hon. Members will now deduct the £300,000 required by the War Office, and they will find the surplus reduced to £3,249,000. I now come to a matter which will, perhaps, interest hon. Members more deeply even than the barracks scheme, looking to the interest which has been taken in all parts of the House in the question. It is connected also with the Services. The House recently agreed to a Resolution calling upon the Government to supply to the Volunteers certain articles of equipment, and on full consideration of this decision we now propose to accept the Resolution, and to set aside a sum of £100,000 out of the surplus to meet that demand. I leave it to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War to find a further sum of £50,000 out of his resources; and it appears to us that the sum of £150,000 will enable us substantially to give effect to the Resolution which has been passed by the House. But until certain inquiries are completed it will not be possible to give full details. The Government are glad in this way to be able to meet the wishes expressed by Parliament for further assistance to this valuable Force; but I think it is right to remind the Committee that every new grant made to the Volunteers must necessarily carry with it some corresponding increase of Government control, and that Parliament, in sanctioning increased expenditure, will require to be satisfied that it obtains a fair return in the improved efficiency and heightened value of the Force. I have therefore deducted another sum of £100,000 from the surplus, and I have asked myself how I should deal with the remainder. If we were to look simply to popularity, I believe there is nothing we could do that would more satisfy, I will not say legitimate, but illegitimate public opinion than if we were to spend a very large portion of the surplus. I call to mind all the demands made upon us from various quarters. I call to mind what the men of science have asked us to do. I call to mind what the artists have asked us to do, and what the educationists have asked us to do. If any collection of pictures is offered for sale we are denounced if we do not immediately purchase it. Every collection I am told is one which ought to be at once secured for the nation. If we have valuable sites we are told it is niggardly on our part if we do not erect magnificent public buildings upon them at the earliest possible moment. We are asked more largely to endow Universities. We are asked more largely to endow Technical Institutions. We are asked more largely to endow Intermediate Education; and now we shall be asked what we propose to do with regard to assisted education. To meet half the demands made upon us, I believe £2,000,000 of this surplus would soon be scattered. Possibly the money would be well employed, but it would soon be scattered, and the burdens of the people would not be lightened. We think that we have done a great deal in meeting the fair demands that have been made upon us. The other day we bought land at Kensington for £100,000. We have taken a new departure in giving sums to a number of new and valuable colleges. We have been more generous to the National Gallery and the British Museum. We have done a great deal. Though there may be at this moment rather a flow of opinion in the direction of extravagance and an inclination to call everything niggardly which does not correspond to the wishes of those who desire this expenditure — notwithstanding this, I think it would not be right to allow all these claimants to dip their hands *ad libitum* into the Treasury chest. As long as I retain my office I shall think it my duty, on the whole, to sit tight upon the lid of that chest. But it may be said that we have been extravagant in other directions. There are men who think that while we have been economical in some respects we have been extravagant as regards the Army and Navy. [" Hear, hear ! "] I am glad to hear that that cheer was not a very general cheer. We have not been extravagant as regards the Army and Navy, if we have only done those things which were imperatively necessary in the interests of the country. I would frankly say that when I leave my office I shall look back with some pleasure on having diminished our national liabilities through the conversion of the National Debt; but I shall also look back with pleasure, and with no apology whatever to the fact that, notwithstanding that I have been Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have agreed to large proposals which I believe will have the effect of strengthening the defences of this country. I think a Chancellor of the Exchequer is one of the last Ministers who ought to be indifferent to the absolute security of our shores and the security of our commerce. What would be the effect upon our Revenue of even panic preparations? What would be the waste of money and the expense the moment the slightest panic occurred? But if the panic should be of a more real character, then every one knows that in a country like this, dependent as we are on other countries for our food supply, and dependent, too, upon that credit which is the mainspring of our commerce, I think it almost baffles the imagination to think of the consequences of a real, serious panic at the present moment when the whole edifice of our commerce and trade is built up upon credit. I think myself, and I say it in great frankness, that our bankers and merchants trade with too little reserve, and I think that the reserves of the supplies in this country are also reduced to an insecure amount. Looking to all this, I believe the Government have done no more than their duty in availing themselves of a portion of the great resources which the country has placed at our command in doing what we can to strengthen and improve our Army and Navy. We have done much. I will not recapitulate what we have done with regard to the Navy. As regards the Army, we have armed the infantry with a new magazine rifle. We have supplied the artillery with new guns. We shall have fortified our coaling stations by the end of this year. We shall have improved the defences of our Imperial Ports. We shall have done all this, and I say we have no apology to make for the large sums which we have had to impose upon the people for all these purposes, although we would gladly have used them to reduce the burdens which the people cheerfully bear. We must admit them to be heavy burdens, and we will lighten them as soon as it is possible for us to do so. I have said that, notwithstanding our surplus, we do not intend to listen to any proposals of extravagance. But I believe that in the proposal I am now going to make I shall have cordial support from all Members of the Committee. We propose, if we can persuade other interested parties to do so, to deal with the question of the postage to India and our colonies, and to reduce all rates, by whatever route, to 2½d.—not ocean postage only, but postage by the quickest route. The existing rates to Australia, India, China, and the Cape range from 5d. to 6d., and the House is also aware that in the case of some of these letters they would be transmitted cheaper to their destination if they were posted abroad. No doubt it is a great anomaly that if letters are sent to Calais they can be posted to our officers at Quetta or in Burma more cheaply than if they were posted at a British post office. We propose, therefore, to remove these anomalies if we can persuade the other interested parties to join us, because we cannot act in this matter without the cordial co-operation of the colonies themselves. The ocean penny postage has been recommended very much on the ground that it would draw us closer to the colonies; but it would be a very unsatisfactory beginning to such a proceeding if we were to embark upon a cheapening of postage to which the colonies themselves were opposed. My right hon. Friend the Postmaster General will place himself in communication at once with the Agents of the colonies, and he will see, with every hope of success, whether they can be induced to reduce the postage in the future to 2½d. by whatever route the letters may be sent. The loss which would be incurred by this process would be £80,000 in the present year. It would be £105,000 in a complete year. But I think £80,000 will cover it in the present year, looking to the negotiations which will take place. Now, I intended to explain to the Committee how this loss would arise. But, looking to the ground which I have still to traverse, they will excuse me if I do not defend the proposal more than by making this statement. I can only say this: that we must assume this loss, because we cannot recoup ourselves on letters which go by the quickest route by any increased correspondence. We have to pay an amount equal to 1d. for the foreign transit, and the cost of the letter in this country and in the colonies or in India is taken to be even more than 1½d. Thus, if you add 1d. to the 1½d., the cost of the postage will be more than 2½d., or at least fully 2½d., and we cannot expect to recoup ourselves. But I have little doubt that the Committee generally will be prepared to make this sacrifice out of Revenue for the purpose of removing anomalies and securing cheaper communication with India. India will also have to be consulted on the proposal. We are at present in communication with her on the subject. So far I have spoken of increased expenditure, namely, that for barracks, Volunteers, and postage. I now come to the point of remissions of taxation. But, still, I must ask hon. Members to be patient while I deal, only in a word or two, with some very humble claims for relief. The Committee will think that it is the duty of a Chancellor of the Exchequer quite as much to look to humble claims to relief, if there is any hardship or injustice, as to deal with larger questions. Apprentices have to pay a stamp of 2s. 6d. on their agreements, provided no premium is paid. If a premium is paid they have to pay the heavy duty of 5s. for every £5. If there is a premium of £20 they must pay £1. This appears to me a great hardship, and I propose that on no agreement of apprenticeship shall there be a higher stamp than 2s. 6d. Then, take the case of insurance policies. Life insurance policies are only subject to 1d.; but health insurances, which provide that if a man falls sick he is to receive a certain sum during his illness, have to pay a 6d. Stamp Duty. It has been represented to me by the Societies interested that this is a hardship, and I propose to remove it by putting health policies on the same footing as other policies. I mention these matters, not as being of fiscal importance, but to give them the publicity they deserve. Quite apart from larger questions, I propose a slight change in charging the Income Tax as between different schedules. Complaints have been made that when a man loses under Schedule A he is not allowed to set off that loss under Schedule D. So it happens sometimes that a man who has lost heavily on his farm has to pay full duty on the profits of his business without being allowed to deduct the loss on his farm. That I intend to put right by allowing the loss under one schedule to be set off against the profits of another schedule. There will be no appreciable loss under these heads, and I merely mention them for the purpose of giving them publicity. The first serious inroad which I propose to make on my surplus is a change involving the remission of the duty on gold and silver plate—a change which, I believe, has been expected, and I will not conceal from myself that it is not pleasant for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to part with a tax which is paid with the greatest possible cheerfulness by those who have to pay it. There is a positive alacrity on the part of the chief members of the trade in paying the Plate Duties, and they are protesting in advance against their abolition, and I must, therefore, make out some case why we propose the abolition of these duties. The first shake was given to them by the Report of the Select Committee of 1878-9, of which I was myself a member. They recommended as follows:—That

> "Whenever the condition of the Revenue will permit the duty upon silver plate should be abolished."

The Committee were moved to make this recommendation by the consideration of the unequal incidence of the duty and the great proportion it bore (nearly 40 per cent.) to the raw material, and the importance of promoting the use of silver as an article of manufacture. The Indian community soon fastened on the suggestion of the Committee. I think myself that India has attached almost undue importance to the abolition of these duties. But the fact remains that they do attach enormous importance to the abolition of the Plate Duty. They consider it will have an effect upon the price of silver, and will enable them to send more articles of manufactured silver to this country, though I think they are rather sanguine in their expectations. It might be contended, and I have heard it argued, that we ought not to look to the wishes or expectations of India, but to British interests alone. But the argument had been rather cut away from under our feet by the recollection in India of a transaction which they consider to have been unfair to themselves, justly or unjustly I will not say. But they consider that the duty upon the imports of British cotton goods was promoted and carried rather with a view to British interests than to Indian interests, and they have made a kind of passionate claim in return that in this matter of Plate Duties we should consider the interests of India. Now, they have had a good deal to go upon with regard to declarations made by various Chancellors of the Exchequer. The abolition of the duty was recommended without hesitation by the recent Royal Commission upon Gold and Silver as a practical measure for diminishing the difficulties of India. It is difficult in the face of a recommendation of that kind, coming from a strong Commission, to resist that pressure. I mention it because, as I say, we must have strong arguments for the repeal of a duty, the repeal of which is opposed by the trade of silversmiths in England itself. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian handled the subject in 1881, and proposed to reduce the duties gradually. He would have preferred an immediate reduction, but he shrank from it on account of the drawback, which then was estimated to amount to £170,000. The right hon. Gentleman subsequently withdrew his proposal, but referred to the matter again the next year. From that time to this the matter has been in suspense. My right hon. Friend, speaking of this duty, said—

> "The state in which it was left perplexes the market, places transactions upon old plate on an embarrassed footing, inflicts much mischief and limitation on the industry, and possibly tends to lower the standard of our manufactured goods, whilst obstructing the taste in design."

With all these declarations before us, I said last year that I should wish to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission to abolish the Silver Plate Duty, but that I had no means at my command to make up for the loss and also to meet the demand on the drawback. Now that the moment has come, I consider we are practically bound, by all that has occurred in the past, to take the bull by the horns and to deal with the duty on this footing. Viceroys of India and ex-Viceroys of India have all attached the greatest importance to this matter; and it would create a serious disappointment in India if we were not to deal with the matter. But, it may be asked, if we propose the abolition of the duty on silver plate, why should we abolish the duty on gold plate? The duty on gold articles amounts to a very small sum. The House will be amused to learn that the greatest portion of the duty on gold plate is paid by wedding rings. Three-fourths and more of the duty, amounting to £23,300, on gold plate come from the duty paid by this most necessary article of civilised society. Otherwise gold plate is so small an item that, practically, no revenue whatever is derived from it. Nor would the question of drawback arise in the case of gold plate, and I propose no drawback. As regards silver plate, the amount of drawback involved I put at £120,000, which I add to the £80,000 we shall lose by the abolition of the Gold and Silver Plate Duties. The drawback used to be estimated at £170,000. But the uncertainty of the trade has prevented the accumulation of stocks, and I feel confident that £120,000 is a fair sum. But we do not propose to pay any amount of drawback which may be claimed. We shall take £120,000 as a maximum, and arrangements will then be made, which shall be stated later in detail, for paying the drawback on the stocks in the hands of dealers, provided they have not passed into use. I am told that it will be possible to get a perfect statement of the whole of the silver plate on which drawback may be claimed. If the claims should exceed £120,000, then a corresponding diminution will be made upon the drawback claimed, so that the sum which the State will have to pay shall in no case exceed £120,000. The Royal Commission said that we should not pay more than three years' drawback, and it will be seen that £120,000 is about two years' drawback upon silver plate, because the amount of Silver Plate Duty is about £60,000. I have now arrived at a point when I must attack the bulk of my subject. I trust that hon. Members will not feel that I have unduly trespassed upon their attention in explaining these smaller items of remission. I have, of course, to think not only of the audience listening to me now, but also of those outside who are interested in silver plate or any of the other matters which I have touched upon. They require a rather full statement, and I was therefore bound to make it, although it may be somewhat wearisome. I now come to the larger remissions. After deducting the barrack expenditure my surplus stand at £3,249,000. I have further disposed of £100,000 for Volunteers, £60,000 for reduced postage, and £200,000 for silver plate, leaving me in possession of £2,869,000, but after having read so much during a portion of this year about the gigantic sums that would be at my disposal, I confess that the proportions of that surplus appear to me to be very modest, when I have to set against this amount the number of claimants who have already put forward their claims to remission. There are the advocates of the abolition of the Tea Duty, but the abolition of that duty would mean a sacrifice of revenue of £4,900,000. Then someone spoke of a reduction of 2d. on the Income Tax. That would mean a sacrifice of £4,000,000. Then there are others who are not only anxious for a free breakfast table, but for free pudding as well, and who desire the abolition of the duty on all dried fruits. Then there are my friends who are interested in the brewing trade. They consider that they are entitled to the remission of the 3d. per barrel imposed last year. Then there are the County Councils, who ask that we should hand over to them the House Duty, there are other persons asking for this modest trifle of £2,000,000, and others suggesting that the whole of the duty should be remitted. Well, I ask, what is my surplus amongst so many? I will proceed to consider the various claims that may be met; but instead of approaching the task with the feeling that I am going to give satisfaction to any of the claimants, I feel that the amount to be divided is comparatively so small that I shall create much disappointment in apportioning it. I first turn to the question as between direct and indirect taxation. It has been suggested that the present Government have favoured more than they ought the payers of Income Tax. A right hon. Gentleman opposite considered that we had unduly favoured the payers of Income Tax by reducing the tax from 8d. to 6d., but I hold that in having done so we have simply restored the *status quo*. The extra 2d. was imposed for a special purpose at a special time when there were special exigencies, and it should be remembered that at that time a proposal had been made to increase indirect taxation, which proposal was, however, withdrawn. Therefore, I consider that we have in no way altered the *status quo* as regards direct and indirect taxation or favoured direct taxation by the course which we have taken. Again, it must be remembered that we imposed an additional duty, the Estate Duty, upon real and personal property. Looking, then, at all the circumstances I do not think that we have altered the *status quo* Hon. Members may ask, what is the opinion that ought to be held with regard to the *status quo* before these reductions of taxation and these increases of taxation take place? That is a speculative question which would lead us very far afield, and on which there might be very great differences of opinion. I approach the question in a simpler fashion, and ask myself how the surplus of this year has mainly been produced. Has it been produced mainly by the increase of direct taxation, or by the increase of sources of indirect taxation? When the subject is considered from that point of view, it will be seen that we owe the greater portion of the surplus to the increased consumption of articles which pay duty and contribute towards indirect taxation. Out of the sum which remains to me, nearly £2,000,000 has been yielded by indirect taxation, and the Government have determined as indirect taxation has mainly produced the surplus, that mainly to the relief of indirect taxation shall the surplus go. Now, the surplus has been mainly produced by the consumers of alcoholic beverages, but no man in the House would be prepared to say that they should be relieved. The sum which they have contributed, which amounts, after deductions, to about £1,500,000, we propose to apply to the reduction of the duty upon tea by 2d. in the £1. The tipplers shall relieve tea. The loss upon the Tea Duty will amount to £1,500,000. I know that it has been said that a reduction of 2d. will not benefit the consumer; but I am not prepared to admit that argument. We have to look to our own responsibility, and we must bear in mind that a duty of 6d. upon tea represents a very large proportion of the primary cost of the article. If tea were sold to the consuming classes at anything like the cost price, it would appear at once what an enormous relief would be given by a reduction of 2d. in the £1. But the amount of the relief is concealed by the fact that the middleman walks away with so large a proportion of the price which is paid by the working classes for their tea. In many villages the working classes pay as much as 2s., as 2s. 6d., even as 3s. for tea, while much tea can be bought at a cost price, 11d. or 1s. If you take the price at 1s. 6d., a price at which good tea can be bought and sold, and realise that from that price you are going to make a reduction of 2d., you will see that you are conferring an appreciable boon upon the consumer. It would be very satisfactory if full advantage could be taken of this reduction by consumers, so that they should receive their full share of the relief. Let them, therefore, consider whether through better organisation, or by other means, it may not be possible for them to buy on better terms this article of primary necessity, this article so important to the whole of the working classes. I will here frankly say that I am opposed to the total abolition of the Tea Duties. There is no doubt that tea is the one article through which those who neither smoke nor drink contribute to the Revenue, and therefore I think it right that a Tea Duty should be maintained; and I should, besides, be sorry to think that we were going to cut off altogether any of the sources of our Revenue. But looking at the way in which the surplus has been created, and bearing in mind the circumstances to which I shall have to call attention hereafter, I think that justice demands the application of this portion of the surplus in the manner which I have indicated. I proceed now to another article, in respect of which I propose to grant remission—I refer to the duty on currants. It is at present 7s. per cwt., and I propose to reduce it to 2s. The loss of Revenue, after allowing for a very substantial increase of consumption, will probably be £210,000. I am not prepared, looking to the further remissions which I have in view, to increase the amount of this remission on dried fruits by making it applicable to all. The Committee will ask why I have selected currants for this special benefit, while the tax on raisins remains as before. Well, currants come chiefly from Greece, and Greece attributes such immense importance to this reduction that she is prepared in return to make a substantial offer of reduction on British manufactured goods. To Greece, the exportation of currants under most favourable circumstances is a question of life and death, and besides the pleasure of reducing the duty on an article of general consumption in this country, it is a matter of sincere congratulation to Her Majesty's Government that we are at the same time able to propose a fiscal change which will be eminently advantageous to that little Kingdom, in whose fortunes the British people have always taken so warm an interest. Let me now mention the change in her tariff which Greece on her part is willing to make, which I think will be received with considerable satisfaction by certain of our exporters. On herrings there will be a reduction of 33 per cent., on cotton yarns 16 per cent. on single grey yarns up to No. 24 English; simplification of classification in bleached and dyed, coupled with reduction of duty of about 25 per cent. The extra duty on dyed yarns will be abolished; common grey cotton tissues reduced by 12 per cent.; and for other cotton tissues a simplification of classification on the same principle as that for yarns, while for cotton goods specially mentioned in the Greek tariff, such as embroidered goods, cretonnes, and men's clothing, the reductions range from 20 to 50 per cent. On linen, hempen, and jute tissues, the reductions range from 18 to 50 per cent.; on carpets and certain other mixed woollen fabrics, an average reduction of 20 per cent. is made. On indigo, the duty of about 1s. in the £1 is reduced to a nominal charge of about 1d., and the duty on acids is reduced one-half, to a nominal charge of about 1d., while on non-refined acids the duty is entirely abolished. These reductions will relieve the British trader from duties which are calculated at from £50,000 to £60,000 a year. The Committee will see, from what I have stated, why currants have been specially selected for fiscal favour this year. I should be extremely glad if the countries exporting raisins, such as Spain and Turkey, should see their way to meet us in a similar manner on a future occasion, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer might again be able to achieve the double object of cheapening raisins to the home consumer and securing lower duties on British exports to those countries. One piece of warning, however, I must give. I have been told that there is every probability that with the greater cheapness of currants, they will be used for the manufacture of wine in this country. I do not mean the innocent currant wine that used to be made in simple English homes, but wine manufactured out of dried currants and worked up into claret, or what is sold as claret. In France, dried currants are, I believe, largely used for the manufacture of wine. There is, of course, no harm in wine being made out of currants, but if that be done the Excise might have something to say on the subject. It would not do to have such wine manufactured at home escaping from Excise Duty, while imported wine had to pay duty. But I may go further, and warn the manufacturers of British wines that they are, in some cases, sailing dangerously near the wind, and that some of these wines are brought very near the standard of alcoholic strength which is taxable. Indeed, I am compelled to add to the Budget Resolutions one for imposing a duty on imported wine rendered sparkling in this country. I now come to another article, which is also one of universal consumption—I mean the duty on beer. I admit that last year, by changing the standard of gravity, I practically increased the duty to the extent of 3d. a barrel. I also admit that I stated, in reply to urgent pressure from the brewers, that the tax had been increased for a special purpose, and that the tax having been increased for a special purpose a fair case would be made out for consideration if a surplus should arise which should permit an all-round reduction of duties. Beer would then have a claim side by side with other consumable articles. Has the case arisen? Who has paid the tax? Some brewers have declared that this additional impost has been a kind of Income Tax upon them. But is this so? Have they paid it, or have they recouped themselves by a slight deterioration of the article they have sold? I will not attempt to decide this point. I cannot admit that when a tax is put on a great article of consumption it must be regarded as a tax on the producer. However, looking to the whole circumstances of the case, I am prepared to part with the additional 3d. per barrel as an item of Imperial Revenue. As Chancellor of the Exchequer I will forego this additional 3d., though it makes a gap in my surplus of £386,000. At the same time, I must ask my hon. Friends who are interested in the brewing trade not to indulge in any premature congratulations. They must share in the fortunes and responsibilities of the liquor trade generally, and if special appeal should have to be made to that trade and to that interest they must share in the burden. I have now disposed of £1,500,000 as remission on tea, £386,000 as the loss on beer, and £210,000 as the loss on currants. Adding these together they make a hole of £2,096,000 in my surplus, and all that remains to me is £773,000 for remission and for the necessary balance to be carried over at the end of my account. The direction in which I now look to give relief is a class upon which I have always looked as being heavily taxed as compared with the rest of the community—I mean the class just above the working class, the class, if it is not offensive to say so, that begins to wear the black coat, who have a very hard battle to fight, and who have demands made upon them in many respects severer than those falling upon the ordinary working men. I refer to men with incomes ranging from £150 to £400 a year, men of the poorer trading class, small tradesmen, and clerks, men who generally live in houses of the value of between £20 and £60 a year. Upon these; who have to pay in addition rates and taxes, the House Duty falls with special severity. If they have shops they pay 6d. on their shops and they pay 9d. on their houses. Houses below £20 are exempt. Following, to a certain extent, the principles adopted as regards small incomes, I propose to reduce the duty on houses between £20 and £40 from 6d. and 9d. to 2d. and 3d., and on houses between £40 and £60 to 4d. and 6d. The Committee will perhaps scarcely realise the number of persons whom this will affect. The Committee scarcely realises, I think, the extent to which both the Income Tax and the Inhabited House Duty are paid by men of comparatively humble means. I thought at one time it might be reasonable to allow every Income Tax payer to deduct £400 from his income before paying Income Tax, but I was staggered to find that this would involve a loss of £4,700,000 out of a total receipt of £13,000,000. To allow every Income Tax payer to deduct £200 would involve a loss of £2,500,000. This shows to what an enormous extent the Revenue is contributed to by people of small incomes. The relief which I propose in regard to Inhabited House Duty will, it is calculated, affect some 800,000 persons of humble means and will cause a loss of upwards of £500,000, or a full quarter of the whole of the tax. But it is a relief which I am glad to propose, and which I believe the House will be glad to sanction. I have two other minor proposals in regard to this tax. I have endeavoured to see whether lodging-house keepers could be relieved from the hardship of which they complain of having to pay on their houses as if they were residences, when they are really places of business. I propose that, in future, lodging houses shall pay on the lower rate as if they were shops or places of business. We propose, also, to meet a wish which has been widely expressed, and with which I have every sympathy. We propose to extend the definition of structural separation, so that if a house of the value of about £20, let in tenements to the working classes, shall be certified by the proper Local Authorities to have been constructed so as to be fit for the separate habitation of the families of the working classes, it shall be treated as houses below the value of £20, which are now exempt on the ground of structural separation. I have endeavoured to relieve the pressure of the House Tax at those points where it seems most to weigh with heaviness upon that portion of the population who have the greatest difficulty in meeting the burden of taxation. Now, it will be seen that if we deduct the £540,000 which those changes and remissions in the House Duty are estimated to cost from the sum at my disposal, £773,000, I am left with a balance of £233,000—as small a margin as I think circumstances will justify me in retaining. I ought now to have come to my peroration, and to have all but concluded the long statement which I have been making to the House. Under ordinary circumstances, indeed, I should now have completed my task, but the circumstances are not ordinary, for two years ago we were called upon to deal not only with Imperial, but with local finance, and to local finance I must apply myself for a still further short space of time. In 1888 I endeavoured to settle the question as between the ratepayers and the rest of the community, and I made large transfers from Imperial Funds to Local Exchequers. Somehow or other, the large amount of those transactions has not been sufficiently realised. I have been charged, and the Government have been charged, with not having fulfilled our pledges to the ratepayers, the County Councils, and the Local Authorities. It is said that the Local Authorities have not received that degree of relief which they expected. Well, if they have not gained, the Imperial Exchequer has, at all events, had the loss. I have practically handed over £2,750,000 to the Local Authorities. The question is, how would the Local Authorities have been faring now if no change had been made connected with local finance, and how are they actually faring? I will take the three kingdoms separately. England has received a gain of £2,236,000; Scotland, £282,000; and Ireland, £256,000. Accordingly, we are giving to the Local Authorities of the United Kingdom, this year, £2,774,000 more than they received before Local Government was taken in hand. But let me put in this caveat. If the Probate Duty should not continue to yield the amount expected, the Local Authorities must take their chance with the Imperial Exchequer as to the amount which the duty may yield. We assigned certain sources of Revenue to them, but we did not pledge ourselves to the amount. They will note, however, that this tax on personalty is generally progressive. But it is said that we are indebted to the Local Authorities for £800,000. A claim has been put forward by Local Authorities belonging to all political parties that we should make good this £800,000. I noticed the other day that, in the other House of Parliament, Lord Ripon, Chairman of the Yorkshire County Council, spoke with as much warmth about the gap made in the finances of the County Councils by the loss of the Wheel and the Horse Taxes, as my hon. Friends behind me have often spoken in this House, as if I were supposed to be pledged to make up the sum in question; but I have always denied, and I do deny, that pledge. The Government was not pledged to any specific amount, if the House did not accept the means by which we proposed to raise it. Suppose I were to say to the Agricultural Committee of this House, or to the Central Chamber of Agriculture, "I will renew my offer; I will pay my debt in the same coin in which I contracted it—I will re-introduce the Wheel and Horse Tax, and ask you to pass it." Would that be a satisfactory solution? And yet no one can deny that I should have redeemed the pledge which I am supposed to have given. Hon. Members would not be grateful to me if I renewed those proposals. But, though I deny the pledge, I should much like to find the means for removing all complaint at the hands of the County Councils. I should wish to see them start on their difficult task thoroughly satisfied as to their financial position. More than that, connected with the question of rates and local finance is a matter of supreme importance — the question of the superannuation of the police, both in town and country. Hon. Members are aware of the most unsatisfactory footing on which this matter stands. In London the Police Superannuation Fund already stands at a figure which absorbs £150,000 out of the total raised for police purposes, and the police are not content, but are urging that their superannuation should be put upon a more satisfactory footing, on principles which have been embodied in Bills submitted to Parliament on several occasions. In the country the question stands in an equally, if not still more, unsatisfactory position. Some Superannuation Funds are insolvent, others are constructed on such arbitrary principles that no satisfaction whatever is given to the police. Bill after Bill has been introduced, but has been withdrawn, because the ratepayers shrank from facing the necessary cost, and there was no other source of Revenue to be found than the overburdened rates. It would be a great satisfaction if we could find means for dealing with this superannuation of the police. I wish I could find a further sum to relieve the County Councils from the drawbacks to which they declare the failure of the Horse Tax and Wheel Tax has exposed them. But more than this, I wish I could find a sum to enable the Local Authorities to buy up some of that enormous multitude of licences which has so largely contributed to the drink bill of the nation. I wish I had a million and a quarter to dispose of for this purpose, aye, a million for England and a quarter of a million for Scotland and Ireland. Yet in what direction may I turn? I have stated that, as between personalty and the ratepayers, the transfer of the Probate Duty closed the account, as far as my own action would go. The Horse and the Wheel Taxes would be difficult to carry, nor would their aggregate amount cover the needs which I should like to meet. I am sure that the Committee are with me in my objects. Will they support the Government in its effort to find the means? The objects are great; they are overwhelmingly important; but to accomplish them I must raise £1,250,000. To find that sum I turn to alcohol. I propose a surtax on all spirits, British and foreign, of 6d. a gallon, to be specially paid over to local taxation account, to be used generally for the purposes I have indicated, and to be distributed as I shall presently describe. A tax of 6d. a gallon on spirits will yield £918,000 on the number of gallons which I have calculated in my Imperial Budget. But, Sir, we must be fair. It would not, I think—and I believe the House will concur with me—be fair to put 6d. on spirits without taking toll of beer. I told my hon. Friends connected with the brewing interest that we might have to meet again before I closed my speech. If alcohol is to be taxed for local purposes, in some of which the brewers are as much interested as the distillers, beer can scarcely escape; and so I fear I must ask them to contribute the 3d. per barrel of which they have been relieved in the Imperial Budget, as their share towards that Local Taxation Fund which I have been so peremptorily and universally called upon to reinforce. I will not press the argument that there is nothing inappropriate in the consumer of spirits contributing in some slight measure to the maintenance of the police and of those local funds out of which the cost of pauperism has to be met. If the gigantic proportions of the drink bill of the nation are but half as responsible for police work and pauperism as is sometimes alleged, it is certainly not out of place that the consumer of spirits should contribute, in some slight measure, to the cost of those local purposes. But if the brewers contend that it is out of their pocket, and not out of that of the consumers, that this 3d. a barrel is paid, I respectfully point out to them that in our proposals we include the assignment of a sum equal indeed to their contribution for the purpose of diminishing the number of existing licences, a process in which, I believe, they will find much compensation and consolation. I do trust that the Committee, if they agree to the objects, will support us in the means which we require to carry them into effect. I admit the struggle may be severe. We may have to deal with great interests, but if they are not shortsighted they will co-operate with us in the task we have undertaken. If we can settle this great licensing question—we cannot do so in one year, but if we can make progress towards solving that question—we shall have done something with which, I believe, all parties in the House will be satisfied. Let me place before the Committee the special distribution of the sum to which I have referred. The Beer Duty, on its present basis, is expected to yield £9,650,000. The 3d. per barrel assignable to local purposes will produce £386,000. After making an allowance for some watering, foreign spirits, if subjected to a duty of 10s. 10d. instead of 10s. 4d. per gallon, are expected to yield £4,822,160, and 6d. out of the 10s. 10d. will produce £223,000. I have made an allowance in my Imperial Budget for the reduction likely to follow on the increase of 6d. per gallon. The Customs and the Excise expect some decrease in consumption, not perhaps in the total amount drunk, as measured by measure, but because further watering may take place in consequence of the increased duty. If that should occur, possibly a large number of persons will not be so very much disappointed or dissatisfied. Home spirits, if subjected to a duty of 10s. 6d. instead of 10s. per gallon, are expected to yield £14,595,000, and 6d. out of the duty of 10s. 6d. will produce £695,000; and if the Committee add together the additional duty on foreign and home spirits the total amount will be found to be £1,304,000. Therefore, the total further amount assigned to local taxation will be £1,304,000, and will be divisible according to the proportion fixed for Probate Duty, and distributed among the Three Kingdoms as follows:—England, 80 per cent., £1,043,200; Scotland, 11 per cent., £143,440; Ireland, 9 per cent., £117,360. I propose to allocate the English portion as follows:—To the Metropolitan Police Superannuation Fund, £150,000; to the County Police Fund, £150,000; to Local Authorities, for the purchase of licences, £350,000; and the remainder—£393,000, or whatever it may be—for re-inforcing the funds of the County Councils; making a total of £1,043,000. If I now add together what I have already given to Local Authorities—namely, £2,774,000—and the further amount I propose to give—namely, £1,304,000, less the amount to be appropriated for licensing purposes, £438,000—the amount will be £866,000, or a total altogether of £3,640,000 as the relief to local taxation. I may here state that it would certainly be useless to give money for the purchase of licences if at the same time we did not stop the issue of new licences. We propose, therefore, and we shall hope to carry, if the House takes a real interest in this question, as I believe it does, notwithstanding the tasks which are placed upon us and the duties we have to perform, at least this suspensory measure that, until the whole question can be dealt with, there shall be no further issue of licences at all, unless in exceptional circumstances, such as the development of new populations or new wants which may appear here and there. Again, I say if the licensed victuallers take a broad view of their position they will see that this is a matter in which the temperance party and they have one and the same interest. Licensed vituallers do not object to a diminution in the number of new licensed houses, and, certainly, the temperance party desire it ardently. Eighteen years ago, on the introduction of Lord Aberdare's Bill, the licensed victuallers themselves suggested that they should be taxed to contribute to a compensation fund. We hope that we shall combine both parties and be able to reduce, or at all events to restrict, the issue of licences. As I have had the opportunity, through the courtesy of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), of learning what he has been doing in a very assiduous study of the licensing question, I shall be guilty of no breach of confidence when I say that he would also propose in his Bill that there shall be a cessation of the issue of new licences. I am glad that we may find common ground in that respect on which we may work. The House will see that we have taken a comprehensive view of the question of Local Finance, dealing with it broadly and in all its aspects. We may be embarking on great difficulties. But the House will, I hope, relieve me from the necessity of explaining those proposals in further detail. [The First Lord of the Treasury here made a communication to the right hon. Gentleman.] The transfer of old licences to new licences would continue. That is a further step which we consider to be necessary. As to the superannuation of the police, I omitted in my statement to say that, of course, while we find the new system of superannuation, and while a special portion of the tax is raised for dealing with this Superannuation Fund, we shall make it conditional on the Local Authorities receiving those funds that they on their part shall deal satisfactorily with them. We are not going to hand over this money unconditionally to the Local Authorities; advantage must be taken of this occasion to put the superannuation of the police on a sound and satisfactory basis. With regard to distribution in Scotland and Ireland those funds cannot be distributed precisely on the same footing, the circumstances being so different, and a future occasion will be taken to explain how the money falling respectively to those portions of the country will be assigned. Now, at last, I have achieved my double task. I have dealt with the Imperial Budget, and I have had to deal with a supplementary Budget, and possibly in the opinion of some hon. Members they may find the supplementary Budget almost as interesting as the Imperial. We have opened up and are touching a large number of questions, and we have endeavoured to solve some of them without seeking any violent measures. We believe it will be seen that if we are imposing a new burden on the consumers of drink we at the same time believe that great consequences may flow from the steps we have taken. I feel that I may have created in the breasts of many some disappointment. The fabric of our finance is so vast and so gigantic that even a surplus of these respectable dimensions seem scarcely enough with which to work wonders, though I hope much good may flow from its judicious and equitable employment. I venture to hope that if the County Councils, reinforced by the funds which are placed at their disposal, are able to enter with fresh energy upon their task; if the police is improved, if licences are diminished; if, on the other hand, looking to the reductions of taxation, consumers of tea find some reduction in the price of the article they buy; if humble householders find that the tax paper which they receive at Christmas, and which so often mars their festivities, shows even by a small sum a diminution in the House Tax; if other classes feel the benefit of the remissions, which, though not heroic, we have made, I hope there may be some satisfaction, and that some portions of the community may look back with gratitude on the Budget of this year. Above all, I breathe an earnest hope for the continuance of that prosperity which we enjoy, a hope that a further freedom from foreign complications may continue, that a strengthened harmony between employers and employed may, during the year upon which we are now entering, be developed and fostered, and that all may tend to increase those sources of revenue of which I am for the time the humble steward, and to which we must look for the means of satisfying both the demands of national defence and the constantly increasing demands of progressive civilisation, as well as for that continuous lightening, if it may be, of the burden which rest on the shoulders of the people.

EXCISE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in addition to the Duty of Excise payable under the Act of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter one hundred and twenty-nine, for and upon every Gallon computed at proof of Spirits distilled in the United Kingdom there shall be charged and paid the Duty of Six Pence, and so in proportion for any less quantity."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

(7.15.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): I regret very much, as I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will regret, the inevitable absence of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, whose duty and pleasure it would have been to have congratulated the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not on the ability which he has shown—because that is a superfluous task in a matter of which he is a past-master—but on the favourable circumstances in which he finds himself, and upon the relief of various kinds which the right hon. Gentleman has been able to afford to the community. I am glad to find that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the beginning of his speech, did not put forward a surplus as being a matter to boast of on the part of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. I ventured last year to say—and I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman in an observation he made was alluding to it—that a surplus is not always a feather in the cap of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am bound to say that the explanation the right hon. Gentleman has given to-night shows that that criticism is not applicable on the present occasion. In some preceding years there has been an excess in the estimate of Revenue or an excess in the estimate of Expenditure. I do not agree with the view of the First Lord of the Admiralty, who, I read this morning, anticipated the Budget, and declared that the increased Revenue is due to a Conservative Administration. The mode in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has accounted for the increased Revenue does not seem to have any direct connection with a Conservative Administration, except that the great rush for drink which has taken place this year took place previously in the year 1875, under a Conservative Administration. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the growth of the Revenue has been principally in respect of the article rum, and I suppose the First Lord of the Admiralty may, by his exertions, have contributed to that increase, and that that is the reason he takes credit to the Conservative Administration for the large surplus. I am not going — it would be extremely unwise in me — to enter to-night into the very important matters laid before the Committee by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He has shown one very satisfactory thing—that the Revenue of this country is recovering the elasticity it once possessed. The figures he has given with regard to the Customs and Excise almost exactly reproduce the figures of 1875, which we were in the habit of looking to as the high-water mark of the Revenue of the country. We find that the Customs and Excise in 1876 yielded £47,646,000, and that this year they have yielded £47,580,000, nearly the same figure. Ever since 1875 we have been deploring the falling off both of Customs and Excise. We find now that the Stamp Revenue, which, in 1876, was £10,200,000, has risen to £15,275,000—an increase of £5,000,000. In the House Duty there has been an increase from £1,400,000 to £2,000,000; and in the Post Office Revenue there has been an increase of £1,000,000. The figures show that the general financial condition of the country is not only sound, but elastic. I refer to this only to show that we should not listen to any of the quack remedies which have been suggested in times of financial depression and commercial distress. We hear a great deal about Fair Trade, and are told the country is being ruined, and that the cause of the financial depression is the commercial system of the country. We have now proposed to us another remedy, and that is a dealing with the currency. These are ideas which enter into men's minds when they find there is a temporary depression of trade or of commerce, but in spite of Free Trade and of monometallism, we see that all that distress has disappeared, that trade is reviving, and that finance is returning to its former figure. Therefore, we should wisely come to the conclusion that it is not Free Trade that is the cause of the depression, and that it is not bimetallism that is required in order to restore the finances of the country. Then we were told that the foreigner would drive us from the markets of the world. ["Hear, hear."] Yes, the hon. Member for Sheffield holds that faith, I know. An interesting Report has been issued as to the trade of Germany for the first half of 1889, which is published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. That Report states that the imports into Germany have much declined in consequence of the protective tariff. It goes on to say that it is to Free Trade and her faithful adherence to it that Great Britain owes her quick recovery of prosperity, for it enables her to obtain her raw material without additional cost. The result is that, while the amount of German exports has fallen, the amount of English exports is increasing. I believe that the Germans are now beginning to recognise that that condition of things is due to the protective policy of Germany and the Free Trade policy of this country. In his former Budget speeches the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken rather a desponding view of the recovery of the commercial prosperity of the country. Last year, and in preceding years, he pointed out that the Revenue from articles of consumption had fallen off. I am glad that the circumstances of the time have given the right hon. Gentleman confidence, and have cheered him up a little, and that the recovered condition of the country has induced him to propose the reduction of the duties upon tea and currants. One matter to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer alluded was the increased yield of the Income Tax, and a very satisfactory increase that is. The increase in the receipts from the Death Duties is also satisfactory. One shows the great growth of the income of the country, and the other is evidence of the great increase in the accumulated wealth of the country, and I think we may safely draw the conclusion that both the commercial system of the country and its monetary system are sound when such results are produced. Talking of the increase of the Income Tax and its relation to the question of the National Debt, I took out some figures which I think are interesting. The figures show that in 1815 it would have required an Income Tax of 4s. 4d. in the £1 to meet the interest on the National Debt; while in 1842 it would have taken an Income Tax of 3s. in the £1 to do it. Now the interest on the National Debt would be met by an Income Tax of 9d. in the £1; and in the beginning of the next century it would probably be met by a tax of 6d. in the £1. That shows the enormous growth in the resources of the country, and we may rely upon its continuance if we do not tamper with the commercial principles upon which the wealth and prosperity of the country are founded. The proposals now made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer will require careful examination. Personally, I have always taken the greatest interest in the reduction of the duty on inhabited houses, and I believe that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman in that matter will be a great boon to a large class of the community. I regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not carried his proposal even somewhat further. If the right hon. Gentleman had remitted the duty upon all houses under £100 a year it would have amounted to a remission of £1,200,000. Out of a total of £2,000,000, the sum of £1,200,000 is paid by persons who live in houses under £100 a year. We shall, no doubt, go into the matter at greater length in the Bill to be brought in; but I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider the figures, with the view of going further than he has done with reference to the limit for Inhabited House Duty. There is another thing to be considered, and that is the great inequality of the House Duty with reference to houses at higher rentals, and the very unfair assessments made on them. Everyone will rejoice that the duty on tea is to be reduced, but no one supposes, I imagine, that the reduction of the duty on tea will stop at 2d. in the pound. This can only be looked upon as a commencement of dealing with the Tea Duty. And the same may be said of the duty upon dried fruit. With reference to the duty on beer and spirits, which it is proposed to increase, I have no sympathy with the beer and spirit interest which would induce me to oppose the increased duty, but I remember that, in the year 1885, a Government was attacked and turned out when they proposed a duty upon beer and spirits not accompanied by a duty upon wine. But I did not hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that any additional duty on wine is to accompany the additional duty on beer and spirits. There are some other matters less agreeable than those which are present by their reduction—namely, those which are conspicuous by their absence. The Opposition have always maintained that one of the first duties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is to remedy the inequality between the taxation on real and personal property. That redress the Chancellor of the Exchequer might, and I think should, have found out of the resources of his Budget. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, I think, last year, that this is a matter which requires time and consideration. So it does, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer has had time and consideration, and from a Minister of his great and known ability and experience the country had a right to expect there would be a serious attempt to redress the present injustice in our financial system. There is another question which appears to me of capital importance. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has a surplus of about £3,000,000, but he is not sanguine of any great increase in the Revenue, and, therefore, cannot calculate in future years upon surpluses of the same character. What is he going to do with the question of assisted education, to which the Government have pledged themselves? The Prime Minister said the question of assisted education would depend upon the surplus the Chancellor of the Exchequer had this year. Not a word has been heard on that subject to-night. The fund out of which education can be assisted has been given away. We had a right to expect that such a sum would have been reserved out of the surplus as would have enabled the Government to redeem the pledges they have given with respect to education. I hope that before we part with the surplus we shall hear something from the Chancellor of the Exchequer on that subject. I hope it was by an oversight the Chancellor of the Exchequer made no statement on the subject. I will not detain the Committee any longer than to ask one or two questions. First of all, with reference to the coinage. The plan of paying for the deterioration of the gold out of the profit on the silver is one which, by anticipation, I have approved. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has spoken on this subject on former occasions, and has always said that he regards it as connected with the question of the £1 note. I think it important that the Committee should have that subject fully discussed. I think the two questions are very closely connected, and we ought to have a statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject. I know the great influence the Chancellor of the Exchequer possesses with the moneyed classes in the City, and I believe that a proposal on the subject of £1 notes coming from him would be very useful. With reference to the Floating Debt, the right hon. Gentleman has said truly that there has been a large reduction of the Funded Debt, which has been accompanied by a very sensible increase in the Floating Debt of somewhere about £18,000,000.

MR. GOSCHEN: The increase in the Floating Debt in the hands of the public has been £9,000,000.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I only desire to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he means to make any special proposal or provision with reference to the Floating Debt. In the variations of the Money Market the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be caught with the Floating Debt, and, indeed, I believe that for a few months in this year he was caught, and was paying more than 4 per cent. on the Floating Debt. There is only one other observation I desire to make, and that is with reference to the form of the Revenue Returns. They are greatly amended, but in some of the Returns of the Revenue which are published, especially the Quarterly Returns, the gross produce of the taxes is not given, but only the net produce which goes to the Government. That may be very well as a matter of account. It treats the taxes which go to the Local Authorities as if they had not been received at all. But the result is that in the case of the Excise it shows an apparent decrease, whereas, in point of fact, there has been a large increase. That misleads the public very much. I think the form which shows the gross produce and the amount transferred is the best. And now I have only to congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the country on the revival of prosperity which is shown in the condition of the Revenue, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be quite sure that there will be every disposition to deal in a spirit of candid criticism with the proposals he has made for dealing with the Revenue. After a period of depression we seem again to be rising on the crest of the wave. It is very difficult to explain what are the causes which have led, throughout all the countries of Europe, to a depression of trade. I do not think the causes have yet been ascer tained. In trade, as in harvests, there seems to be cycles—seven fat years and seven lean years—and none of those variations ought to disturb the determination of the people of this country to adhere to the general financial and economic policy of the country which has brought such benefits to it, and has placed its finance upon so sound and satisfactory a basis.

*(7.42.) Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I will not now follow the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) in his references to the question of Fair Trade, some better opportunity will soon occur. Before making one or two observations upon the Budget laid before the Committee by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I should like respectfully to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman and the Government upon the two great concessions which they have made. The first is the effect, the generous effect, they have given to the recent Resolution proposed to the House by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Sir E. Hamley), and which I had the honour of seconding. The effect given to that Resolution will, I am sure, be heartily welcomed, not only by the public at large, but by every officer and man in the Volunteer Force. I can only express the hope that the greater control which the Government propose to take over the Volunteer Force by reason of this increased liberality will not take the form of harrassing and trivial regulations. I also thank the Government for what they propose to do as regards the superannuation of the Police Force. The Police Force have waited long and patiently for a great many years, and I am sure it is gratifying to those who admire their services that those services are at length appreciated by the House of Commons. I am sorry to learn from the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that, in spite of the earnest protests of all the leading firms in the silver trade, he has decided to take off the duty which was at once a source of Revenue and a great preventitive, I am assured on all hands, of fraud upon the purchaser. I very much doubt if anyone will thank him except one well-known dealer, who has agitated this question for a great many years, and, possibly some Indian exporters of silver.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I made one great omission in my speech, which I regret. I ought to have spoken upon the subject of hall marking, which is mixed up with the Silver Duty. When I come to reply I will deal with the matter, but I may inform my hon. and gallant Friend and the Committee that we do not propose to abolish the compulsory system of hall-marking.

*Mr. HOWARD VINCENT: If the right hon. Gentleman assures the Committee that the matter of compulsory hall-marking, to which the trade attaches enormous importance, and upon the maintenance of which it is unanimous, will not be dealt with, I will not proceed further into that question. But, as regards the duty, I should like to say a few words. I do not hesitate to once more call the attention of the House to the fact that every prominent manufacturer in the country is, so far as I have been able to learn, against the abolition of the duty. The silver trade is a flourishing industry. The statistics regarding it prove this, and a recent Parliamentary Return shows that there is a vast increase in the quantity of silver upon which duty was paid in 1886-87, as compared with the year 1879-80. In London the increase was from 442,000 ounces to 535,000 ounces. In Birmingham the increase was from 75,000 ounces to 122,000 ounces. In Sheffield the increase was from 73,598 ounces to 162,852 ounces, or more than double. There has also been an increase in the quantity of silver exported, and upon which drawback has been allowed in London, from 73,000 ounces in 1879-80, to 101,000 ounces in 1886-87. In value, the increase has been over 75 per cent. The only thing which has held the trade back in recent years has been the perpetual agitation in favour of an upheaval of the system which has worked well, an agitation which has disorganised trade to a very large extent. Let me mention what the duties are. First of all, there is the duty upon gold plate, which is not compulsory, of 17s. 6d. per ounce, and that, I understand from my right hon. Friend, is not to be touched. Secondly, there is a duty of 1s. 6d. an ounce upon silver plate, which is compulsory. Thirdly, there is a countervailing duty upon gold and silver plate imported into the United Kingdom, equal to the Excise Duty, and lastly, there are the licences to sell gold and silver plate. My right hon. Friend has not stated whether he proposes to do away with these licences. I trust he intends to do so; the trade confidently expect he will do so if the duty upon silver plate is abolished. These sources of Revenue have produced to the Exchequer, on an average, as I gather, upwards of £130,000 a year, or, in round figures, £72,000 Excise Duty, £10,000 Import Duty, and £48,000 from licences. Will anybody thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for taking away this considerable source of national income? Mr. Edward Watherston may do so, but there are, indeed, few others. In 1883 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he thought he would abolish these duties, but so strong was the opposition of the trade that, on the 17th of April, 1883, my right hon. Friend and Colleague, the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), wrote to us—

> "The Government definitely abandon the proposal to repeal the duties upon silver plate."

Upon this subject 19 of the largest firms in the country addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 18th of December, 1888, a Memorial, in which they said:—

> "The agitation for the remission of these duties does not proceed from the public or the trade at large, but from a very unimportant minority, who have next to no interest at stake, and we, the representatives of firms who pay more than four-fifths of the whole duty, desire to protest against the representations constantly made by these agitators as being far from true."

Similarly, the Sheffield traders last year memorialised the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the effect that—

> "The majority decline to believe that the repeal of the duties on silver will stimulate the purchase of silver plate; that the tax falls almost entirely upon a a class well able to bear it, and from which no urgent demand for its repeal has arisen."

There is also the question of drawback. I understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes that only two years' drawback should be paid to the trade, estimated at about, I think he said, £120,000 or £130,000. I feel convinced of this, that two years' drawback will by no means satisfy the trade. There are considerable stocks on hand upon which it is only fair that, if the duty is abolished, drawback should be paid in full. To give only two years' drawback would be impolitic and unfair to the trade. I need not press further upon the arguments. I have already detailed them, and they have appeared in the Press, and been endorsed by 54 of the leading manufacturers of silver plate in Sheffield and London, and by the principal firm in Birmingham. These firms pay seven-eighths of the duty which is now to be remitted, and they beg the House to leave the Silver Duty and the compulsory hall-marking unaltered. I am glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he does not propose to touch the compulsory hall-marking, to which the silver trade throughout the country attach the very utmost importance; but I fear that now the duty is abolished, the apprehensions of some, that it will be exceedingly difficult to retain compulsory hall-marking, will be realised. In conclusion, I will only say that, despite the brilliant and popular Budget laid before the Committee by the right hon. Gentleman, I cannot help saying that I hope the time will come when he, or succeeding Chancellors of the Exchequer, will lay before the British House of Commons Budgets which will deal, to use the right hon. Gentleman's own phrase, with British interests alone, and seek alone to encourage British manufacturer and production.

*(7.55.) Mr. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I am pleased the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to deal, in a comprehensive manner, with the question of light gold, but I must join the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) in the hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will see his way to give the public the boon of £1 notes. In past times we exported a great many old Dragon sovereigns to Ceylon, where they were used for ornaments, and in Europe and America large quantities of our gold have been melted down. At the time of the Paris Exhibition English heavy gold was melted down, and only the light gold coins returned. The cause of all the trouble is, as I have

already explained in the House, that we coin our gold absolutely free of charge, whereas other countries make a moderate charge for minting. If we charged a small amount, even ¼ per cent, it would preserve our sovereigns, and we should not again be called upon to spend the £600,000 as proposed. I do not advise that we should alter the value of the coin, but I should like to have increased weight, using gold 9-10ths fine, which would make the coin more durable. I would also suggest that the Bank of England should be authorised to receive fairly worn gold coins, and melt them down at the cost of the State. I am very glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman proposes to abolish the duty on silver plate. A portion of the present duty is absolutely protective, because 1s. 6d. per oz. is charged on all foreign imported silver plate, while only 1s. 3d. per. oz. is charged on plate of British manufacture. I am glad, too, to find that the compulsory hall-marking is to be retained, because the charge is exceedingly small, and it prevents unscrupulous dealers from deceiving the public, and so injuring the whole trade. That is a kind of dealing which was practised when hall-marking of gold chains was not made compulsory, and it was said, I remember, that a copper coal scuttle and half a sovereign would make a goldsmith's stock of gold chains. But the tendency of modern legislation is in favour of protecting the public from adulteration, either in food or in the material of the goods they buy. On the other hand, I do not see why there should not be some modification in the hall-marking of silver plate. It is done in the marking of gold. You can hall-mark gold at 22, 18, 15, 12, and even 9 carats; why should not manufacturers be allowed to hall-mark different qualities of silver? Why not have in addition to our present standard of hall-marking at 925 the Indian standard of 916, the French standard of 900, the German of 800, for it is found that the lower qualities are more durable in wear? An arrangement of this kind would remove a great hardship. It sometimes happens that a work of art in silver of high artistic merit is sent to be hall-marked, and if it does not happen to come up to the standard of 925 this beautiful piece of workmanship is liable to be broken up; whereas if a modification were allowed, it could be marked at a lower standard. Passing from the silver plate question, I should like to direct the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to another subject. He has made a great reduction—a grand reduction—in the Debt of the country by his conversion scheme; but he might make another considerable saving by converting, or better still by re-paying, the Turkish Four per Cent. Guaranteed Loan. There is now a favourable opportunity, for the Turkish Government have agreed to convert their outstanding Debt, and it might be a favourable opportunity to get France to assent to the conversion or re-payment of these Bonds. It would be a saving of over £20,000 a year in respect to £2,000,000 of these Bonds that have been drawn for payment, yet by some extraordinary circumstances have not been paid off. If no other means are adopted this country can borrow for the purpose at 2¾ per cent., and France at 3½, and there is no reason why we should keep this outstanding Debt at 4 per cent. At any rate, the Chancellor of the Exchequer could arrange that the Treasury should hold these Bonds. A short time since the Chancellor of the Exchequer refused to state the amount received from transfer stamps on Stocks and Shares to bearer, not wishing to anticipate his Budget Statement. He has not now indicated the amount, but in his long speech it is excusable if he omitted some minor details. But perhaps he will tell us now what the amount is, and will consider whether the time has now arrived to change this very obnoxious tax. Irksome and obnoxious it undoubtedly is to everybody concerned. I know for a fact that people come to a broker's office on settling day with a mass of small bonds, and it is practically impossible for them to affix the adhesive stamp in time for settlement. Indeed, I have been told the Chancellor of the Exchequer's life would scarcely be safe if he ventured within the precincts of the Stock Exchange, so great is the irritation caused by this transfer stamp. There is no objection to the payment of the money if only some other means could be found for exacting it; but the manner in which the tax is paid by affixing adhesive stamps, which will in time cover the bonds, is the cause of general complaint.

(8.5.) MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): An agricultural Representative is not expected to be a financial expert, and I am the last man to lay claim to such a character; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer has devoted a considerable portion of his speech to the subject of local taxation, and has granted an amount of £400,000 to re-inforce the resources of County Councils, for which we are by no means ungrateful; and I hope I shall not be considered presumptuous if I suggest a method by which, without increasing taxation, he might increase his sources of revenue and give still further aid to the agricultural interest. As the right. hon. Gentleman and every Member of the Committee knows, the law is continually evaded in connection with the transfer of shares. The amount of the share is constantly put at 10s., whereas the money absolutely passing amounts, perhaps, to £1. If the right hon. Gentleman would introduce a Bill to provide that the nominal amount of the money paid for the transfer of Stocks and Shares shall be printed on the stamp, and that if this is not done the transfer shall be null and void, the right hon. Gentleman might get a considerable increase of revenue. Then, again, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not particularly tender-hearted when he attacks a big interest. He has very properly taxed champagne, and put a ¼ per cent. on gin distilling, but I should like to ask him on what possible consideration is it that a beverage which has 15 per cent. more alcoholic strength in it than good port, sherry, or hock, should absolutely escape all duty whatever—I allude to British wines. If the right hon. Gentleman will take these two matters into consideration I think he might raise sufficient revenue to give us an extra £500,000 a year. I hope he will not think me presumptuous in calling attention to these matters. I only do so as a Representative of a section of that hard-working, uncomplaining class—the agriculturalists.

(8.10.) MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): I just wish to ask one important question arising out of the latter part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. I am sure that he, with his commercial experience, will realise the fact that when he proposes to buy up a number of these licences and at the same time to restrict the issue of further licences, that will have the effect of adding enormously to the value of existing licences, and I would ask him if he has taken any precaution that this enormously enhanced value shall not be brought in as a charge for compensation when this great question of licensing comes up for settlement.

*(8.11.) MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I have only one question to put, and in doing this I must express my regret that out of his large surplus the right hon. Gentleman has not seen his way to deal with the appeal made by Trades Union to two or three Chancellors of the Exchequer that the Income Tax charged on the incomes of Trades Unions derived from investments in real property should be remitted as I believe it is in the case of Friendly Societies. It is a very small item in the National Revenue, but it would give very great satisfaction to those Unions who have so invested their savings, and it would very much encourage further investment in the same direction, a policy which I think everyone will commend. I do not know whether it is too late for the right hon. Gentleman to consider this question, and if it is not I hope he will do so. The amount of revenue derived from this source is but a few thousands a year, and not at all considerable as compared with the great pleasure it will give to those concerned. Then I have only one other word to address to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He referred, in that portion of his speech in which he spoke of the prosperity of the country during the last few years, to the great caution with which we must regard the prospects of the trade and industries of the country in the next few years; and then, in that portion of his speech he seemed to declaim somewhat strongly against the institution of strikes, speaking with strong emphasis as to their discouragement. Well, of course, we all discourage strikes where we find it possible to do so; but I would beg the Chancellor of the Exchequer to remember that in periods of great prosperity it is the only means labour possesses of enforcing its claim to a share in the general prosperity of the community. I do not say the right hon. Gentleman intended his remarks to be so interpreted as a severe censure of

strikes, but I do say that will be the interpretation placed upon his words by those who speak and write a great deal against labour combination. I am giving my own impression, but I think it is an impression that will be created outside that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was unduly severe on the extreme action taken by many Labour Associations to enforce their claims to a greater share in commercial prosperity. One of the most notable strikes during the past financial year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will remember had the support of all classes of society, rich and poor, at home and in our colonies. In every direction it seemed to meet approval from Bishops, philosophers, and political economists. It would almost seem, from his language, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer wished to revive obsolete theories of political economy which events of recent years have done so much to destroy. I hope he will avail himself of the opportunity at a later stage of qualifying, if not his language, at least the impression his language may convey. This with the reference to the claim of Trade Unions for exception from tax on their real property is the only observation I have to offer now, though I do not say there are not other portions of the Budget open to criticism and adverse comment.

*(8.15.) SIR R. FOWLER (London): I think the Committee must have listened with great pleasure to the very clear Statement we have had, and there are many subjects in it that will have the greatest interest for the country. It is to be regretted that it was not made earlier in the year. Much in it will be keenly criticised both in the great centres of this country and in foreign capitals. I am glad my right hon. Friend proposes to deal with the coinage, and I thank him for his action; and, so far as I understand his scheme, it is a satisfactory method of dealing with the subject. And now I am going to give utterance to what I am afraid will be an unpopular sentiment. I certainly listened with great regret to one part of the Budget, and that was in relation to the duty on tea. I cannot but feel it is a very serious thing to take away a permanent source of revenue. The Tea Duty is not a heavy burden; it is a revenue that comes in very easily. Of course, the expenses of collecting the duty will remain the same, whether the tax is 4d. or 6d., and I do not suppose the right hon. Gentleman anticipates any increase in consumption. I must say that I think that to reduce a source of revenue that brought in a large amount with little trouble is an important step, and a step which I—though I know not many will agree with me—regard with regret. I should have liked that with this considerable surplus—the Chancellor of the Exchequer said it is not large, but he admitted it is considerable—I should have been very glad if he had seen his way to remitting a penny from the Income Tax. The Income Tax presses very heavily on the middle classes. Of course, if a man has an income of £20,000 a year, he can without inconvenience pay a 6d., or even a 1s., Income Tax; but the present rate of the tax does press heavily upon a large and important class. The right hon. Gentleman alluded to what I have always thought would be a very great advantage to the country. He said he had considered the question of remitting the tax on incomes less than £400, but he found that the loss resulting to the Revenue would be too great. I recollect saying in 1873, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian went to the country with a promise of the abolition of the Income Tax, that I was not prepared for that, but that I did think that incomes up to £400 might be excepted. However, the right hon. Gentleman did not find his panacea accepted by the country, and he did not return to power; and when, after six years, he again came into office he had changed his view of the tax. I do not know what view he may hold now; but I think it is a principle of hon. Gentlemen opposite to put all that is possible on the Income Tax, and to cut down other sources of revenue. Of course, we all recognise how valuable this tax is in a time of national exigency, but in a time of prosperity like this the classes who pay the Income Tax are justified in expecting some relief, and I should have been glad had the Chancellor of the Exchequer seen his way to afford that relief. However, he has taken a different course, and I must say many of the remissions he proposes will be very welcome to the country. I am particu-

larly glad he has made the remission in the House Duty; it will be most acceptable to a large and deserving class. I congratulate him also on his proposal for reducing the postage to India and the Colonies. I was glad also to hear his remarks in reference to the trade in alcoholic liquors, and his attitude in this respect must commend itself to a large class in the country. I do not think the hon. Baronet (Sir W. Lawson), who may be taken as the apostle of the view that publicans are entitled to no compensation, was present during the speech; but in anticipation of the objections that may be raised by this section of Members I may say that I hold the view that publicans carrying on legitimate business under the sanction of the State deserve that their interests shall be considered in any changes that are made. It would be a gross injustice to deprive a man of his means of livelihood without offering any compensation. Although I think the Budget has those defects to which I have alluded in reference to the Tea Duty and the Income Tax, I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the approval with which his able Statement will, I think, be generally received.

(8.22.) MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): Perhaps the hon. Baronet will be surprised to hear a Member from this side sharing in his regret that there is to be no alteration in the Income Tax. I have no wish to see any reduction made in respect to larger incomes, but I am exceedingly sorry to find myself disappointed in the hope that the amount of deduction allowed would have been increased from £120 to £150, and the tax imposed on incomes of £500 instead of £400. I am sure a proposal of that kind would give great satisfaction. I speak with knowledge, for I have been an Income Tax Commissioner for 17 years. In Committee of Supply, the hon. Member for North Camberwell (Mr. Kelly) drew the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the House Tax on tenements, and I, following him, drew attention to the large number of houses now built with separate entrances for two or three families. I desire on my own behalf, and on behalf of my hon. and learned Friend, to tender grateful thanks to the right hon. Gentleman for his concession made in this matter. No part of the Budget will give more satisfaction to a large number of struggling families in London than this concession. In regard to the reduction of the duty on currants the right hon. Gentleman has told us of arrangements with the Greek Government, by which they undertake to make reductions on imports from this country. I am most anxious to see closer commercial relations with Greece, and have no doubt these arrangements will conduce to that result. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not tell us if the Greek Government will make any change or reduction in the Export Duty on currants.

MR. GOSCHEN: I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman for mentioning the matter. We have an engagement from the Greek Government that they will not increase the Export Duty on currants, or in any way take advantage of our concession.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN: I was in hopes they would abolish the Export Duty on currants. However, they give us advantage in another way by making large reductions in their Import Duties on English manufactures. The right hon. Gentleman is to be congratulated on a very successful arrangement. I am exceedingly glad also that the question of police superannuation is to be settled. There has been for some years a considerable feeling of dissatisfaction among the Metropolitan Police on this ground, and this deserving body of men are fully entitled to what is proposed on their behalf.

*(8.25.) MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer is fully entitled to congratulation upon the main features of his Budget. It has been urged against his previous Budgets that the consumers' interest had not been protected as it ought to be, but I think that on this occasion the right hon. Gentleman has saved himself from any charge of that kind. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that he did take duty off tobacco for the general consumer; and it might be called a taking off of duty, but it might just as accurately be called the correction of a mistake made by a previous Chancellor of the Exchequer. Of course on this side, and I hope by many on the other side, the reduction of 2d. on tea will be accepted as at least something on account.

But I know on this side it will not be considered sufficient. I think the right hon. Gentleman may make up his mind that he will hear more of it, and I think a Division will be taken. I am pleased to hear of the reduction in the duty on currants; but the remarks of the hon. Member who has just spoken reminds me that when I was in Athens some two months ago this matter came up in conversation with a man who, above all others in Athens, was able to give an assurance, and he assured me that if we took the duty off currants they would at once take off the Export Duty. It is but a small duty, a sixth or a seventh, of our Import Duty, but, however, my informant said nothing in respect to reductions of duties on English imports; and it may prove to be the case that the concessions obtained on these will be of more advantage to us than the abolition of the Export Duty on currants. With regard to the change in the House Duty, I may call attention to the fact that it will add to the number of existing anomalies in respect to this duty. The principle on which the duty is charged, that is on the rental value, is a fair one; but, unfortunately, that principle is only carried out in reference to small houses, it is not carried out in respect to large country houses, mansions, and castles, which are rated far below their actual letting value. On one point Scotch Members are naturally much interested, the £144,000 to be granted to Scotland. Our share of the Probate Duty was applied to freeing, so far as we could, the first five of the educational standards. The amount was hardly sufficient; and I hope, in the allocation he makes, the right hon. Gentleman will remember that we still require something to free all the standards in every school in Scotland. On account of the sum formerly given being insufficient, we have what are very much disliked—graded schools, schools where fees are charged, but which also receive a share of the Probate Duty. Therefore, I hope the right hon. Gentleman will consult Scotch Members as to the application of the £144,000, and I am sure he will find the general desire will be to free all the standards in every school, and also to apply part of the money to evening or continuation schools. The feeling upon this point among the Scotch Members will be practically unanimous. When it was proposed last year to apply our share of the Probate Duty entirely to freeing education, there was not a single dissentient voice against the proposal, and we all feel that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not do better than apply part of his surplus to freeing the standards in those schools which still charge fees, and in assisting evening and continuation schools. (8.31.)

*(9.4.) MR. HUGH WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I congratulate myself on having been present this evening to listen to one of the most able, exhaustive, and practical addresses ever made by any Chancellor of the Exchequer during the present century, and I may add that in my opinion, when the political history of this country comes to be written, the right hon. Gentleman will be entitled to a place, as one of the most successful as well as the most able financiers the country has ever known. I should like, without unnecessarily occupying the time of the House, to call attention to a subject of great interest, magnitude, and importance, in connection with the operations of a body of men who are practically an irresponsible body, who are called upon to deal with transactions representing many thousands of millions per annum. I allude to the Stock Exchange. On this subject I might remind the House of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission of 1878, a Commission which was composed, for the most part, of exceedingly able and practical men. Since the Commission conducted its investigations the Brokers' Relief Act of 1884 was passed—an Act which destroyed all public control over the operations of the Stock Exchange. The hon. and gallant Member for Essex and the hon. Member for Whitechapel have referred to stamps in transfers and Foreign Bonds. I am convinced that the only effective way to prevent the Revenue being defrauded is by carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and granting a Charter to the Stock Exchange.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I beg to remind the hon. Gentleman that he is travelling somewhat beyond the question which is at present before the Committee.

*MR. WATT: I thank the hon. Gentleman for the intimation he has given, my excuse for seizing the present opportunity being that as the Government have appropriated private Members' nights another will not be afforded during the present Session. I will not pursue the subject further. There is, however, one matter with regard to which I should like to offer an observation. I refer to sparkling wines, in regard to which I maintain that no advantage is at present derived by the consumer. The tax on those wines is one which is a very slight advantage to the country at large, while it certainly has an injurious operation upon the trade, and I trust that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take the matter into his careful consideration. I am authorised to state that the trade would much prefer a 3s. or even 4s. rate to a differential tax as at present. With regard to another subject, I must confess that I should have liked to have seen a penny taken off the Income Tax; but as that seems to be an impossibility at the present moment, and in the present stage of the financial condition of the country, I trust that by-and-bye he will be able to see his way to the wiping out of that imposition in its entirety. I would only remind him and the House that that tax was originally imposed as a War Tax, and was never intended to be a permanent burden on the people of this country, nor do I think it should be allowed to become a permanent tax, because in the event of war or any other great and pressing emergency, it would be very difficult, should that burden be continued in its present form, to find the ways and means of meeting the demands thus created. In conclusion, I have only to repeat my congratulations on the able and satisfactory Financial Statement which has been presented by the right hon. Gentleman, and to express my opinion that it will meet with the general approval of the country.

*(9.9.) Sir R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I desire, Sir, as one who has some claim to speak on behalf of our fellow-subjects in India to express to the right hon Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer my deep satisfaction at the announcement he has made of the intended abolition of the duties on silver plate, an announcement which I am sure will be received with much gratification throughout the length and breadth of that country. I am quite certain that the action of the Government with regard to this matter will be hailed by the people of India as a distinct mark of the sympathy felt in this country for its greatest Dependency. Like the quality of mercy, this remission will be twice blessed—it will be blessed to the country that gives it, and also to the country that receives it. On the one hand it will undoubtedly quicken the silver export trade of India, while it will encourage the art manufacture of silver in that country; but, on the other hand, beyond this it will multiply for us in this country those beautiful objects of art which are manufactured in India, and which, in the present state of metallic art in this country, cannot be produced here, and which, in fact, can only be manufactured by the Indian artificer. Furthermore, it will tend *pro tanto* to re-habilitate silver, at least to a certain extent, and thus will tend to afford relief to the agricultural and other interests of this country which are naturally affected by the appreciation of gold. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has alluded to the opposition which has been offered in anticipation of this remission of taxation by the traders of Sheffield, and some other centres of the silversmiths' art in England. These manufacturers fear to meet the competition of the Indian artificers in their own trade, but I venture to submit that their fear is based on an entire misapprehension. The silver manufacture of India is entirely unique, being mainly composed of filagree work, grotesque and otherwise, requiring very laborious hand labour, of a kind certainly not likely to be carried on to any large extent by the silversmiths of this country. Having said this I should like to pass to another part of the right hon. Gentleman's Statement, which deals with a subject of vital importance to the people of India, and that is the proposed remission of the duty on tea. I feel bound to say, as being myself a proprietor of tea gardens in Ceylon, that the Indian and Ceylon tea industry will not gain, but will rather lose, by the proposed remission of duty, because it is probably not understood in England that the remission of duty will act, to a certain extent, as a bounty or premium on the low-priced China teas,

and to that extent we should be discouraging the growth of the superior and higher-priced Indian and Ceylon teas. But my right hon. Friend foreshadows that the Empire will gain by the proposed remission of taxation. He puts it that the consumers may possibly gain 2d. per pound by the remission. I hope they may; but I doubt whether they will gain anything like that amount. I am afraid that a good deal of it will stick to the middleman on the way. Nevertheless, that the consumer may possibly gain something I am free to confess, and I would sooner see my working-class friends giving up their gin and other alcoholic drinks, and taking to tea, even if they took to the low-priced and inferior brands of China. I consider the Budget of my right hon. Friend is distinctly a temperance Budget, and as such I hail it most heartily. The provision which is made by the right hon. Gentleman under which the County Councils will be able to control the supply of temptations to drink is, in my opinion, a most statesmanlike provision. The local veto has hitherto, as we all know, generally been hampered by this dilemma, that it involved a heavy local expenditure, in order, in the exercise of that veto, to stop the supply of temptations to intemperance; or, on the other hand, it meant the distinct robbing of the licensed victuallers, by depriving them of their licences without any compensation whatever. Well, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman's proposals clearly postulate the principle of compensation to those whose licences are to be taken away from them. That, in my opinion, is the only principle which is compatible with national honesty. It is the principle which was laid down in the most emphatic manner by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, in the published letter which he addressed some years ago to a licensed victualler in my own constituency of North Kennington, and it is a principle that I trust this House will maintain. The proposals of the right hon. Gentleman will at once, and perceptibly, reduce the number of licensed houses. It may be said, in fact, that this Budget of my right hon. Friend greases the wheels of temperance, whilst it acts honourably and justly by the licensed victuallers, and to every other class of the community, and as such, Sir, I hail it with the utmost enthusiasm.

(9.20.) MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): Mr. Courtney, the surplus at the disposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is £3,500.000, and that surplus is brought about by the increased consumption of spirits and beer. The question is in what way is that surplus to be disposed of. I venture to say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes a very great mistake in not availing himself of this opportunity of giving Free Education to England, equally with Scotland. A contest will arise at the next election with regard to this question of Free Education, and then the country will be told that there is no surplus for the purpose.

MR. GOSCHEN: What election?

MR. CALDWELL: The General Election. For Free Education in the three countries £2,250,000 would be required. That would absorb so much of the surplus. Then, as to the Inhabited House Duty. That would take £540,000, which still leaves £750,000 to be disposed of in any way the Chancellor of the Exchequer might think fit. As to the reduction of the Tea Duty, it is a question how far the consumer will reap the benefit of it. We know that in the case of the London Coal Dues, the consumers have not reaped the benefit yet. Therefore, we should take care that the surplus really confers benefit when benefit is intended. The reduction of the Tea Duty will benefit the family man, not the workman who has to attend a coffee shop to get his meals. But if you abolished the School Fees the family would thus directly get the benefit of the money. And there is great reason why the surplus should be applied in this way. The consumption of spirits may be taken to have remained stationary among those above the rank of the working classes, and the increased revenue from the consumption of spirits has been derived from the working classes. If the House is really to look to the proper application of the money, I would contend that the families which have been impoverished by this increased contribution to the Revenue, for alcohol, should be benefited by the application of part of the surplus to Free Education. It is evident that the system of the

Conservative Government is to give grants in aid to local taxation, of which the landlords get one-half of the benefit. I contend that this money having come from the working men should go back to them, to benefit their families, and not to the pockets of the landlords. We have got the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a difficulty. In dealing with the distribution of the Probate Duty between England, Scotland, and Ireland he proceeded on the basis of population. It has, curiously enough, been left to a Conservative Government to deal with the three Kingdoms separately. The result has been that the richer country got the larger grant, and Ireland, the poorer, got the least. You are going now to deal with a surplus raised from Excise. Is it not a notorious fact that Scotland pays more for exciseable liquors than England? Yet what does the Chancellor of the Exchequer propose to do? To give Scotland less than her share. In this case the Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us that the money is to be divided between the three countries, according to the precedent of the Probate Duty distribution.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The hon. Gentleman is not correct. The amount of the Probate Duty paid by England is far larger in proportion than that paid by Ireland and Scotland, but the Probate Duty was distributed according to the total contribution of Revenue from each country. Though England paid by far the larger share, we arranged that it should be changed in the direction of easing Ireland and Scotland by distributing the duty in a manner more satisfactory.

Mr. CALDWELL: The population of England is seven times that of Scotland, and the amount granted to England exceeds that granted to Scotland in proportion to the population. It may not exceed the actual amount of Probate Duty paid, but that it, in point of fact, exceeds the amount paid in proportion to population is undeniable. With regard to this new surplus, Scotland will pay an inordinate share, yet she will not get a proportion equal even to her population. I do not suppose the Chancellor of the Exchequer means to do the slightest injustice to Scotland, but, by giving Local Government to Scotland a year in advance, he did us out of £80,000. I do not suppose he will take anything from us this year. I think the Budget, so far as regards two points, at any rate, will not meet the expectations of the country. I had hoped that when the Local Government Bill for England was before the country, and the Government were compelled to withdraw the compensation clauses, we had, once for all, heard the last of compensation to publicans. I do not know why the Government should have entered on a case of this kind at this moment. I do not suppose that the cause of temperance is weaker now than at other periods, and I think that this, like the Van and Wheel Tax, will militate very much against the Government. As to police superannuation there may be a considerable difference of opinion in the country on the matter, and I think it is a pity that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have mixed up his Imperial Budget with an attempt to manage and control Local Bodies who are to receive grants in aid. He would have saved himself a great deal of trouble, if, having money to hand over, he had given it to the Local Authorities, without instructions as to how they were to dispose of it.

*(9.33.) Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his Budget from the point of view I indicated last year, namely, that it is a step towards making the incidence of taxation fairer between the richer and poorer classes of the community. [*Laughter.*] The hon. Member for Northampton laughs, but there is no doubt it does do that. I have always held that, under the present incidence of taxation, the richer classes pay a smaller proportion than the poorer classes, and I think, when the figures are gone into, it is impossible to deny that. I do not say the Budget equalises the incidence, but

it goes a long way towards it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to have relieved in all directions those persons who pay a larger amount in the £1, on their incomes than they are entitled to pay according to the general incidence of taxation. The relief on the Inhabited House Duty, and the reduction of the Tea Duty, will sensibly affect the poor. As to Free Education, it is very easy when a Budget is produced to say, "If something had been done in this direction it would have been better." Of course we should all like to have everything relieved. I suppose every sort of taxpayer would like, out of the surplus, to get the whole of his taxation remitted, but, as we know, that is impossible, and it seems to me that the right principle to adopt is to do our best to so adjust taxation that all classes shall pay according to their means. I have worked it out, and I find that if the whole Revenue were raised by Income Tax, the rate would be about 1s. 2d. in the £1, but capital only pays 6d. in the £1, and whatever tends to diminish this inequality, is hailed with satisfaction. Something has been said about the licensing question. Well, I must say I commend the courage of the Government in tackling that question. I always regretted that the President of the Local Government Board did not stick to the provisions on the subject contained in his great Bill. If the right hon. Gentleman had done so, he would have deserved a greater monument from the advocates of temperance than even the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir W. Lawson.) I believe the only way to successfully deal with this subject is to go into it boldly. It is quite impossible to deal with public-houses without the principle of compensation, and it is absolutely necessary to grapple with the excessive temptations to drunkenness. The licensing question is one which, though troublesome, must be faced by some Government, and I doubt if our Friends opposite, when they come into Office, will care to touch it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, by introducing the system of raising the money out of the drinking habits of the people to pay out a number of the licensed houses, is doing a wise and proper thing. I believe the scheme will lead to the promotion of temperance; and, though I am aware that in my constituency, as elsewhere, our opponents will placard the walks with the declaration that we are going to buy out the publicans, at any rate these provisions will tend to make the people more sober. The superannuation of the police and the reduction of postage are, no doubt, matters of great importance; but the great feature of the Budget, as I have said, is the reduction of the taxation of the poor.

(9.38.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Bright-side): I must take exception to a statement made by the last speaker that this Budget goes a long way to redress the inequalities of taxation which press upon the poor. There never was a more unwarranted statement. Whence comes the fund from which the Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to make these reductions? It is almost exclusively from the working classes; but the remissions of taxation which this surplus enables the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make will benefit rather the classes above them. I am not complaining of the reductions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes. It is true that the working classes will be benefited by the reduction of the duty on tea, but is that not a remission that affects the rich in greater proportion? I believe the reduction in postage will affect our merchants and trading classes very much more than the working classes. Every mercantile house in the City of London will send a hundred letters for every one sent by a member of the working classes. The idea is excellent in itself, and although the Chancellor of the Exchequer is making provision for a deficit which may arise from the reduction, there can be no doubt that, in a very short time, that reduction, instead of diminishing the amount of Revenue, will tend to increase it. I do not at all despair of seeing a penny ocean postage, although I know that every Treasury is opposed to Postal reductions. The contributions from that Service are getting almost beyond reasonable bounds, and more should be done to develop cheap postage. I rose mainly to say a few words as to the abolition of the Silver Duty. I congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on having the courage to abolish that duty and deal with that subject, and I hope and trust that his effort will not be abortive. I trust that this time we shall get rid of the Silver Duty. My hon. Friend and Colleague the Member for the Central Division of Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent) is anxious to maintain the duty in the interest of the British manufacturer, as he believes. The idea is, that to impose a duty of 40 per cent. on the manufactured article is to encourage home manufacture. Nothing can be more absurd. It is the old idea the paper-makers and others entertained, but the very reverse of that which they feared has always been found to be the case. We have always found that when the Protective Duties have been swept away the home manufactures have extended year by year. I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the course he has taken, but I do not know what he is going to do as to compulsory hall-marking. He advanced as one of the reasons for the abolition of the duty, that he was only doing justice to the fair claims of India. In that I quite agree, but you cannot have one uniform standard of compulsory hall-marking. You must allow some kind of elasticity, so that the standard adopted by India or any other country that may import silver will allow for the admission of manufactured silver into this country. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman recognises that something must be done in that direction, so as to admit the articles he contemplates admitting by the abolition of the Silver Duties. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has reduced the Tea Duty, although he has been criticised on his own side for doing so. One of his supporters deprecated the "abandonment" of so important a source of Revenue. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman is abandoning a source of Revenue at all; on the contrary, I think he is taking means to increase it. I have always felt that the reduction of duty has, within a certain time, compensated for itself by an increase in the consumption. I think we all agree that the price at which tea is sold to the poorer classes is most excessive. When the duties on sugar were reduced, it was found that the taking of a penny off meant a great deal more than the penny itself in the reduction of the price at which the article was sold. The public get better acquainted with the net value of the article, which is dealt in with much more freedom as soon as reduction takes place. I believe, therefore, that this is the first step towards a very considerable reduction in the cost of it to the people. I do not believe it is the last step by any means. Having reduced the duty by 2d., I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not remain there, but that he will have to go further, and the duty will probably be entirely swept away. We all regret that the surplus should have been derived almost exclusively from an increased consumption of intoxicating liquors. That increased consumption, however, has not been confined to one class. I notice that the increased duty on wine amounts to more than £120,000, which represents a selling value of between £1,500,000 and £2,000,000. It is also only fair to suppose that the middle and poorer classes have consumed their increased share of beer and spirits. It would be much to be regretted if there was any indication of an increased consumption of drink in the country, because we all believe, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the greatest curse of the country after all is drink. I wish to invite the Chancellor of the Exchequer to touch upon another question. I refer to the question of Free Education. When an hon. Gentleman suggested that this must stand over until the next election, the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed anxious to repudiate the assertion. I am glad he should have done so. There never was a year in which the prospects of the Budget were so falsified as in the present instance. A short time ago nothing could be more explicit than the statement of the Prime Minister that we should have a free system of education if there was a surplus. The right hon. Gentleman himself (Mr. Goschen) also said that the moment Free Education was established in Scotland a great grievance and hardship was established in England and Ireland. Certainly, therefore, we had ample justification for thinking the right hon. Gentleman would have given us Free Education in this Budget. I certainly trust the time is not far distant when we shall have Free Education, for no greater boon could be conferred upon the working classes of the country. All that the right hon. Gentleman has done to-night, however we may appreciate it, falls far short of the great service he would have rendered to the country if he had given Free Education to the children of the people. Nothing can do so much to stop the tide of intemperance, and nothing has done so much hitherto to arrest that tide, as education. With regard to the question of licences, I would point out that the suspension of licences means making existing licences very much more valuable. That is a question that will have to be very carefully dealt with before we go much farther. I am sure we shall all be glad to pass the necessary Resolution to increase the price of spirits, and I am glad of what the right hon. Gentleman has done with regard to the Silver Duty and some other matters.

(9.53.) Mr. SALT (Stafford): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down complained that we have not got Free Education. I am afraid that if we had Free Education the right hon. Gentleman would have complained that we had not got the Tea Duty reduced. We cannot have both things at once. We are told that we are to have a considerable sum of money given to the County Councils, in order to deal with the difficult question of Police Superannuation. I presume that the object of that grant is to make up a fund for Police Superannuation in various cases where the existing funds have proved to be insufficient. I wish to know how my right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen) is going to deal with those counties in which the funds are sound and sufficient. It would not be very fair to make grants in cases where the funds are insufficient and to do nothing for the few counties in which the funds are sound. A question with regard to sparkling wines has been brought to my attention. I am

told that a great grievance exists respecting the surtax on sparkling wines being charged as an *ad valorem* duty, and it is said to give rise to fraud. I have no personal interest in the question, but I trust the Chancellor of the Exchequer will see his way to give it his attention. The proposal respecting the purchase of licences has my sympathy and support. I only wish that the suggestion made in this respect years ago by Lord Aberdare had been carried out. Had it been, very many difficulties in connection with the liquor trade would now have been cleared away. Very great difficulty will probably be experienced in applying the funds to the purchase of licences. The value of public house licences has, in the last few years, enormously increased—in many respects to quite an artificial value. The whole of the beer trade has drifted into quite a different class of business altogether during the last 10 or 15 years. Instead of being in the hands of a great number of small people, the trade is now in the hands of large brewers and capitalists, who are buying up retail houses at very much more than market value. The transfer of licences from one place to another is a matter which, no doubt, will also have consideration. The reason I mention this is, that if it has to be dealt with by the Local Bodies in the counties, they will, I think, require some rather distinct directions from Parliament as to the lines on which they ought to proceed. I must venture to warn hon. Members not to expect very great results from diminishing the number of public houses, as regards the amount of beer and spirits consumed in the country. I expect some good, however, from my right hon. Friend's proposal, and I think some of the worst public houses will be cleared away, to the great benefit of the community. Observation has naturally been made on the very large amount received from the Alcoholic Duties in the past year, but I think we are rather apt to get on the high horse and talk about how the poor people drink. What has happened is simply this: During the last few months working men, who, a little while ago were earning some 16s., or 18s., or £1 a week, have had their wages increased in some cases to 6s., 7s., or 10s. a day. These men, when they were receiving very low wages, lived upon tea. Now they are earning good wages they live upon beer.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): On brandy.

Mr. SALT: Well, brandy. At all events, there is no reason why this increase in the consumption should be attributed to excessive drinking. I deplore excessive drinking just as much as hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, but I cannot say that I deplore the fact that working men are receiving such good wages that they are able to live well and comfortably, and as English working men ought to live.

(10.5.) **Dr. CAMERON** (Glasgow, College): I wish to draw the Chancellor of the Exchequer's attention to a blot on an otherwise excellent Budget. I have always been a very strong advocate of temperance. Ever since I entered Parliament I have supported extreme temperance legislation, and I have myself secured the passing of Bills which have much diminished drinking hours in public houses. I have no friend among the publicans. I have been constantly and persistently opposed by the publicans, and so long as I remain in Parliament am likely to be opposed by them. But, Sir, I am a friend of fair play. When my right hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he proposed to put a small tax on beer and a large tax on whisky. I opposed that as grossly unfair, and I regard the present proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to the whisky duty as grossly unfair in the same way. I am in favour of taxing alcohol to the utmost extent of taxation it will bear without encouraging illicit distillation, but as regards whisky the Commissioners of Inland Revenue said it would be dangerous to add any taxation for fear of increasing illicit distillation. It is notorious that alcohol is chiefly consumed in England in the form of beer, while in Scotland it is consumed in the form of whisky. In the form of beer alcohol pays about 1s. 5d. a gallon of proof spirit, at present, whereas in the form of whisky a tax is imposed to the extent of about 10s. per gallon of proof spirit. You propose now to add 3d. per cask upon beer and to add 6d. per gallon on whisky. Is not this making people in Scotland through their favourite tipple pay enormously more than people in England through their favourite tipple? What makes the grievance more serious in the case of Scotland is, that we recognise no vested right in licences, and do not want you to assist us to purchase licences. In every step we have taken in the way of curtailing the trade of licensed houses, we have given no compensation. The law with us stands on quite a different basis from that which it occupies in England. The Magistrates who represent the people in Scotland have absolute control in the matter of new licences. If I thought you could diminish the consumption of whisky by any extra taxation, I should overlook a great deal in the way of unfairness in any proposal to achieve such an object; but I do not believe this proposal will have that result. We have a great deal of illicit distillation, as it is, and if you increase the tax you run a great danger of increasing this illicit distillation. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) brought forward his proposal it created so great an outcry that he was obliged to abandon it, and I shall be very much surprised if the present Chancellor of the Exchequer does not find himself in a similar position. It will not improve the feeling with which the people of Scotland will receive these repeated attacks upon their favourite beverage—a beverage which has been described as almost synonymous with freedom—when they remember that of the two Chancellors of the Exchequer who have made them, one was a Member, and the other an ex-Member, for the City of Edinburgh. I should like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he proposes to do with the £144,000 he intends to allocate to Scotland. The Probate Duty grant given last year aided the remission of school fees to a certain extent, but it has been insufficient, and I trust the right hon. Gentleman will see his way to follow precedent in this matter, and complete the work then commenced. There can be no difficulty in the matter. The work has been half done, and Local Authorities have been led into extravagancies which will compel them either to impose heavy local taxation, or to retract the benefits which have already been conferred, and this

£144,000 would be a most acceptable sum for the crowning of the edifice that has been raised.

*(10.15.) MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): It is perhaps well, before this debate closes, that one or two remarks should be offered by a County Member on this side of the House, inasmuch as the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has dealt very generously—some people may think almost too generously—with County Finance. I understand that the Probate Duty has amounted to more than the right hon. Gentleman anticipated, and yet he is proposing to hand us over the proceeds of the Beer Duty. I would add one word of protest to what has fallen from my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), and other Members, on the question of Free Education. After the very distinct announcements of the Prime Minister in the autumn, the words in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to Assisted Education struck me as singular. He put the question of Free Education on a par with buying pictures for the National Gallery. He went on to say that if he yielded to such demands—if he did not sit tight on the lid of the chest—he would have the whole of his mighty surplus scattered, and still the burdens of the people would not be lightened. I am sure the country will take note of the position to which Free Education has been relegated by the right hon. Gentleman. On one subject I am sure the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman will meet with universal acceptance. I refer to the Inhabited House Duty. Those acquainted with Town Holdings might possibly object that this remission is only too likely to go in London, not into the pockets of the poor occupiers of small houses, but rather into the hands of house-jobbers and owners of small property. The class the right hon. Gentleman wishes to relieve is substantially the class whose incomes vary from £150 to £400, and a little over. We all wish to relieve them, but I venture to say it is time to consider this question of the taxation of small and precarious incomes on a somewhat wider principle than is contained in the Budget. I do think that when we have a surplus of £3,250,000 in one year, to be followed by a surplus of £3,500,000 in the next, a great opportunity has been afforded to a financier who has brilliantly distinguished his tenure of his present office of dealing with this question of small and precarious incomes. I hope that next year the question may come more to the fore, and that some relief from direct taxation will be afforded to small incomes. With regard to the temperance question, we must all feel some pleasure at seeing the right hon. Gentleman so conspicuously and so obviously running off with the Bill of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) under his arm. The right hon. Gentleman has, as far as I can judge, adopted all its principles and provisions. As to the compensation question, I was rather surprised that the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) did not protest more vigorously against the gross injustice of the Scotch having to pay for buying out English public houses. According to the proposals of the Government in the Local Government Bill two years ago, the compensation was to come first from the county ratepayers, and secondly from a fund raised by an increase, limited to 20 per cent. increase on the present licence duty. In the discussion on the Local Government Bill, if my memory serves me right, the right hon. Gentleman, or some defender of his proposals, went so far as to say that the increase of the duty would by itself form a sufficient fund for dealing with the question of compensation. The Government then sought to place the burden on the trade, but now they propose to place it upon the unfortunate consumer, and to tax the tempted instead of the tempter. I cannot help expressing my satisfaction at the lowering of tariffs obtained by the arrangement which has been made with Greece. I noticed that Gentlemen opposite cheered his announcement on that point, as if it was a grand victory of the principles of reciprocity. I venture to say it is just the other way. It is a victory of Free Trade, and an application of Mr. Cobden's principle of obtaining reductions of tariff in other countries by reducing the tariffs here. I welcome many of the proposals in the Budget. Everyone must con-

sider it an advanced Budget; at the same time, I think we have great reason to protest against the total failure of the Government to redeem its promises in respect of Free Education.

*(10.24.) Mr. GOSCHEN: There are a great many points on which I am asked to reply, and I will try to do so as briefly as possible. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down referred to the very important matter of assisted education, to which the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) alluded in his remarks on the Budget. I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for the spirit in which he has discussed it. The hon. Gentleman who has just spoken said that I put free education on the same footing as the buying of pictures. That is drawing an inference which is scarcely warranted from remarks which were intended to be somewhat jocular. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), in the early part of the Session, said he reserved the question for next Session. It is not merely a question of giving money for assisted education, for enormous importance must attach to the conditions upon which the money was given. An hon. Member has spoken of the matter as being reserved for the next General Election. I do not know when the hon. Member thinks the next General Election will take place, unless he imagines it will be between now and next Session. I do not think that will be the case. Of course we are liable to the changes and chances of this mortal state, and the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), who does not seem to share my opinion, may be in possession of secrets with which I am not acquainted, but I do not think we need speak of postponing free education until after the next General Election. As far as I can calculate the chances of politics, it will fall to our lot to deal with the question, and we look forward to dealing with it next year. The right hon. Member for Derby thought we should have exhausted all our resources. I believe I see £500,000 which will be available next year, and which is not available this year. This year we spend £300,000 on barracks. Again, we have this year a drawback of £120,000 for silver plate, and that will not fall to be paid next year, and there is £100,000 for the Volunteers, not a recurring item. I can assure the Committee I have carefully considered our liability with regard to assisted education in framing my Budget this year. Supposing we do not realise greater advantage from articles of consumption than I have estimated, there is generally now a progressive increase from the Death Duties, which is almost automatic. I am bound to say that we consider ourselves committed to the question of assisted education, and I am afraid that the liability of finding the necessary funds will fall upon me. I trust I shall be able to meet that liability, which, in fact, I must meet. I hope now the Committee will consider I have made a categorical declaration with respect to assisted education. The hon. Member for West Nottingham spoke in terms of reproach and condemnation as to what I said about employers and employed, and went out of his way to draw an inference from the remarks I made. I repudiate the inference which the hon. Member draws from my words. I said, in language which I believe will be accepted and appreciated by almost every Member of the House, that I trusted the relations between employers and employed would be harmonious during the present year, and I pointed out that the internecine struggles between the employers and the employed are a drag on the prosperity of the country, and might fill us sometimes with alarm. No word fell from my lips in criticism or condemnation of either party in the struggle. I spoke with absolute neutrality, but surely I am entitled to say, as having an interest in the prosperity of the country, that we desire to continue and increase the harmony between capital and labour, between employers and employed. The hon. Member spoke with perfect courtesy, but I cannot accept the interpretation he put upon my declaration, and I would not have what I did say misinterpreted in any degree. The hon. Member also spoke about the exemption and non-payment of Income Tax on property which is held by Trade Unions. It is not a question as to the amount of money which the Exchequer would lose which would in any way induce me to oppose such a wish; but the question must be considered with the general principles

which attach to Income Tax on land. I am not able to enter into the subject minutely this evening, but I promise again to look into it. I strongly hold that every person not getting an income of £150 should not be called upon to pay, but, on the other hand, I do not think as Trade Unionists they should receive exceptional treatment to other citizens as to the funds they possess; they must, with all other classes, be justly treated. The right hon. Member said something with regard to the currency, and hoped that the Government might undertake some measures with regard to £1 notes and the currency generally in connection with the Coinage Bill to be introduced. I have been studying the question of reforms in the currency, and I should be very glad if before we leave office it should be in our power to deal with the question. I do not despair of it. I do not say of the question of £1 notes more than that I must reserve myself, but there are questions connected with the currency I should be glad to deal with while I have the power to do so. I omitted to refer earlier in the evening to my statement last year that the cost of restoring light gold coinage should not be put on the taxpayer at large, but that the remedy should be looked for in banking directions. We have now been saved from the necessity of further legislation at the present moment on that subject by the large profit which we have realised on one form of banking transaction—namely, on the issue of silver. The right hon. Gentleman also complained that the Revenue Returns did not show the aggregate amount which is realised by different forms of taxation. I admit the inconvenience, but I think it is a temporary one. Comparisons have been complicated and difficult during the past few years, but as soon as the new system has been inaugurated I think that the complexity and difficulty will cease to exist. I attach great importance, however, to this point. Sums which are raised for local purposes should not be considered as raised for Imperial purposes, and they should not figure twice in the national accounts. I promise to see whether we can keep the local finance separate from the Imperial finance, in order to meet the legitimate wish of the right hon. Gentleman, and to present Returns in a form which will admit of a convenient comparison. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Floating Debt. I do not know that any special measures will be necessary for dealing with the Floating Debt, because I believe by the funds in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners we shall, within a reasonable time, be able to bring the Floating Debt back almost to the point at which it stood before. A large Floating Debt exposes us to fluctuations of interest which might be extremely inconvenient. The right hon. Gentleman said, but not with perfect accuracy, that there was a time when this country had to pay more than 4 per cent. on the Floating Debt. That was not the case, because it was only on £1,500,000 of the Floating Debt that we were obliged to pay four per cent. But the general rate at which we have raised funds under the Floating Debt has been, I think, £2 14s. The fact is that our Floating Debt securities are extremely popular in the whole banking world. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman, however, in not desiring to have a too large Floating Debt, because three or four years out of five we may be able to make considerable money upon it, but we might be caught in one year, and the loss might wipe off the profits of preceding years. There is something that grates on the national feeling in having to pay, even temporarily and on a small amount, a rate above the rate paid in the funds. Therefore, although we have done extremely well as regards the Unfunded Debt, having been continually able to borrow at 2 per cent., and sometimes at 1½, under this form of securities. Still it undoubtedly is not our wish to multiply them, or even to maintain them at their present amount. I trust I have explained myself sufficiently to the right hon. Gentleman. I feel very strongly the necessity of keeping the Floating Debt within moderate limits, Then I turn for a moment to the Tea Duty, upon which much has been said. One hon. Member objects to the reduction of the Tea Duty, and would rather, he says, have had assisted education. But if the reduction of the Tea Duty should be followed by assisted education, I think he would have no cause to complain, for then he would have the advantage of a reduction of the Tea Duty one year and the advantage of assisted education would be realised in the next year. But my hon. Friend behind me (Sir R. Fowler) complains of the manner in which the Tea Duty has been dealt with, on the ground that we are parting with a permanent source of Revenue. But we have not parted with it, and we do not intend to do so. By putting the duty at 4d. there will be a chance, if we should ever have to make a special effort, of calling upon the consumers to contribute something to that special effort. If we treat it, on the one hand, as a permanent source of Revenue, but at the same time put it, if I may say so, on a peace footing by reducing it considerably, we retain it as a source of Imperial Revenue, as I, for one, desire to retain it. Here is a short letter which I have received on the subject, which amused and interested me very much, and which I think is genuine:—

> "Sir,—Being a non smoker and a non-drinker, not eligible for Income or Property Tax, not able to stand coffee drinking, but withal a patriot though a Radical, I would like to know how I am going to stand my 'corner' in regard to the expenses of my country if I do not pay something through my teacup, if you take off the Tea Duty."

I call that a sensible letter. I have not—but not in consequence of that letter—taken off the whole of the Tea Duty. I place it at 4d. I keep it as a source of Revenue, a national reserve, and though some hon. Members may wish to abolish it altogether, I protest earnestly against diminishing too much the number of our sources of Revenue. My theory is that having reached a certain point, though we may remit when we can in order to lighten the general burden, we should keep what I may call the skeletons of our regiments intact, so that, to quote the writer of the letter, every man should be able to stand his "corner." The right hon. Member for Derby regretted that we had not seen our way to deal with the Death Duties. I may remind the Committee that last year the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian declared that a real adjustment of the whole of the Death Duties would require almost a Session to itself. But this question does not stand alone. The re-construction of the Income Tax in certain respects would have to go in any case hand in hand with a re-construction of the Death Duties, and that is a task which we think the dimensions of the present Session forbid us to undertake, especially looking to the warning we have received. With regard to one of the most important proposals of the Budget—namely, the increase in the duty upon Spirits—I am not surprised that a protest has come from Scotland based on the assertion that whiskey is the favourite tipple of that country, and that the Scotch people drank more whiskey in proportion than the English people do, and that, therefore, they will have to pay more in proportion in consequence of the increase of the Spirit Duties than the English people will have to pay. A large portion of the money so raised, however, will be applied to various local purposes, and I am glad to find that the hon. Member for Glasgow is already looking forward with great pleasure and content to the manner in which a part of the extra duty is to be applied in Scotland. It must also be remembered that the extra duty is in some degree compensated for by the large proportionate share which Scotland obtained two years ago in the distribution of the Probate Duties, the greater portion of which are paid by England, while Scotland and Ireland largely participate in them.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): Not according to population.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I repeat that while England pays the larger share of those duties, Scotland and Ireland are allowed to have the advantage of their distribution. In these circumstances I do not think that either Scotland or Ireland have any reasonable cause of complaint. Ireland especially, as being the poorer country, has always received the utmost consideration, and she has always received the benefit of the doubt when there was a question as to which way the scale inclined.

Colonel NOLAN: On what figures does the right hon. Gentleman found that statement?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I am afraid the hon. and gallant Gentleman will not accept my assurance, but I can assure him that my statement is founded on thoroughly impartial calculations.

Colonel NOLAN: By whom?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: By those who collect the Revenue, and the impartiality of whose statistics are above suspicion, and who have been consulted on these subjects by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian.

COLONEL NOLAN: Have they put these calculations above my Returns?

*MR. GOSCHEN: I am afraid I cannot accept the figures of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, who is undoubtedly a partial man and evidently holds strong views upon the subject. I, however, believe in the impartiality of the calculations before me, and in the position in which I am placed I have felt bound to look very carefully into the figures. With regard to the disposal of the fund in Scotland, that is a matter that is not yet finally concluded, and it will receive the most careful consideration in connection with the whole circumstances in the case of both Ireland and Scotland. It is not proposed to deal with Ireland and Scotland in precisely the same way as England, and separate arrangements will have to be made with regard to each country, which I hope to be able to place before the House at a very early time. With regard to the application of this new tax, observations were made by the hon. Member for Stafford, who referred to the question of police superannuation. The hon. Member's observations were very pertinent, and we had clearly before us the point to which he has called attention—namely, what would be the just way of securing the distribution of the money among counties some of which have already taxed themselves, while others have not. It is a difficult problem which the Government will endeavour to solve with equity. In reply to the hon. Member for Essex, I may say that the County Councils will get £393,000, besides £300,000 for the police; together £693,000. Then there is £160,000 for pleuro-pneumonia, which will lieve the ratepayers in the Three Kingdoms to a very considerable extent. If those figures are added together it will be found that, irrespective of the advantage to be derived from the sum set apart for licences, there is a sum of about £850,000 applied to the Local Taxation purposes. The hon. Member will admit that that is an ample redemption of the pledge given by the Government. Mention has been made of the arrangements with Greece, and here let me take the opportunity of stating that much credit is due in the management of these affairs to my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who has given great attention to questions of tariff, and also to the talented representative of the Greek Government in this country. The matter stands thus: the Octroi Duty on currants is still levied by the Greek Government, but that Government have very fairly met us by reductions on imports of English manufactured goods, so I do not think we have a right to press them any further. There is one point I have to mention in connection with the change in the duty on silver plate. I omitted to state that while we shall leave the law as to hall-marking practically in the state in which it now stands, we shall make special arrangements in regard to India. India exports to this country her manufactured silver, and, generally, I think, that silver is of the same standard as her rupee, and somewhat below the standard adopted in this country. We propose that the Indian goods shall be specially hall-marked and shall be allowed to be imported at the Indian standard. We propose also that the Indian Government shall be allowed to establish assay offices for this purpose, and certified by Indian authority that they are up to standard, Indian silver goods will be allowed to be imported here. In this way I hope we shall satisfy India. In other respects we do not propose to interfere with arrangements under the existing law, or change the practice as to hall-marking. One important matter I must not omit to mention, and I am glad to be reminded of it. The Committee will bear in mind the proposal that a certain sum should be placed at the disposal of the Local Authorities for the purchase of licences; and it has been pointed out, though it was a matter which had not escaped us, that it would be no legitimate consequence of that arrangement, but, on the contrary, a consequence we should deplore if the value of public houses should be raised by the very measure we are introducing to give the power of purchasing these licences. We acknowledge it would be perfectly right to introduce some limitation by which any increased value which is given to public houses owing to the enactment of the measure which we shall have the honour to introduce, shall not be taken into account in any future compensation that may be given. With regard to the *ad valorem* duty on wines, I have been asked as to the result of the change made last year, which was exactly equivalent to the imposition of an *ad valorem* duty in some repects. We were anxious that the change should not operate against the importation of the cheaper sparkling wines from Germany and from the Saumur country, and I am glad to say that, although there have been some objections raised, our plan has, on the whole, worked with great smoothness. I know that all wine merchants will not be ready to admit that; but it is the fact that the anticipated importation of wine paying the 2s. 6d. duty has not diminished with a corresponding increase of the wines under the 1s. duty. It was thought that higher class wines would be introduced under the 1s. duty; but the watchfulness of the Customs and the *bona fides* of the trade have prevented that result, and the proportion remains practically as heretofore. With regard to the Tea Duty, it was proposed that the reduction should come into operation on an after May 1. Sometimes a longer period has been given; but I am led to believe that stocks have been rather exhausted, and the date I mention I think will be convenient to all concerned. I appeal to the Committee to allow the Resolution to be passed. ["No, no" from Colonel Nolan.] It would be according to precedent on previous and similar occasions. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh, when he proposed an increase of the Spirit Duty, though it was subsequently rejected by the House, was allowed to take it on the first day. Great inconvenience would result from the uncertainty to the trade if the Resolutions are not passed to-day.

(11.1.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I do not know any precedent for the Budget Resolutions being taken exactly at 11 o'clock. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken as if he occupies a freehold of his seat on the Treasury Bench, and the cheers of his friends show that they think so, although he may be too modest to say so. He has been explaining what he is going to do next Session; but while he was doing so I ventured to interject a remark as to the possibility of a General Election before then. The right hon. Gentleman said that I might possess some secrets unknown to the Government. Sir, I possess no secrets; but I do know that the constituencies are anxious to pronounce a verdict on the conduct of the Government. Now, Sir, I am bound to say that I think this is a peddling Budget: it tries to satisfy everybody, and it satisfies nobody. I could understand it if it proposed to abolish the Tea Duty altogether; but, instead of doing that, it only takes away one-third; it takes off 2d. per lb., and nobody will profit by it. This is a middleman's and a capitalist's Budget. The right hon. Gentleman said he would have abolished the Tea Duty entirely, but that he had not a sufficient surplus to do it. But, Sir, he would have had a sufficient surplus to make the abolition of the Tea Duty an easy thing, had it not been for the enormous expenditure of the Government in preparations for war and war armaments. This year, and for several subsequent years, the country will have to pay £1,430,000 for the increase of the Navy, and to spend further money in erecting new barracks for our soldiers. A considerable sum is to be given to the County Councils for the superannuation of the police and other general purposes. Nothing could be more objectionable, in my opinion, than giving large sums from the Imperial Treasury to the County Councils, because the money is collected principally from the inhabitants of the towns, and it will be expended chiefly in making roads and generally improving the property of the landowners. Then a large sum of money was to be given in order to compensate the publicans. I object to this insidious way of dealing with that question. Let the right hon. Gentleman bring in a specific Bill saying that the publicans have a freehold, and that they are to be compensated out of Imperial taxation, and then the country will know what it means. I am astonished that more notice has not been taken of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's little bargain with Greece in relation to currants, because the statements of the right hon. Gentleman in that connection amount to the enunciation of a new fiscal policy. I very much regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not made alterations in the Income Tax, a tax which operates very unjustly upon professional men and those engaged in trade; and I urge the Chancellor to consider whether he cannot, as they do in America, make some distinctions between income derived from investments and casual income derived from professions and trades. I think that this is a Tory Budget. I have done my best to protest against the excessive expenditure of the Government in civil matters and in preparations for war. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has pointed out that he has reduced the National Debt to a considerable extent; but I am one of those who consider that it may be reduced too much. I do not possess so very great an interest in my grandchildren as to save them from paying all these debts. The right hon. Gentleman has not pointed out that he is going to increase the National Debt by a sum of £30,000,000, should the Government be able to carry a certain Bill now before the House.

(11.20.) Colonel NOLAN: I think the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer show not only that the right hon. Gentleman has a knowledge of finance, but that he is also an accomplished electioneer. I admit that it is not a bad electioneering Budget. I hail with pleasure the reduction on tea, but I do not understand why the duty on raisins should not be reduced as well as that on currants; they are both made from grapes, and I do not see how a distinction is to be made; the result will be endless confusion. Then the right hon. Gentleman has taken off these duties at the expense of Scotch and Irish whisky. I consider that the tax is put most unequally upon spirits as compared with beer. I object also to the system of creating fictitious surpluses followed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Why should only 1s. duty be paid on claret and 9s. 6d. be paid on spirits, seeing that it is the poor who drink spirits? You have got a majority in England and a minority in Ireland, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in bringing forward his Budget, is simply going with the majority. Why should poor people have to pay 10s. instead of 9s. 6d. per gallon, while the claret drinker is not taxed so heavily? Then as to the distribution. Could you have any more iniquitous distribution? I will leave out the case of Scotland, which is similar to that of Ireland, only that the case of Ireland is much stronger than that of Scotland. The origin of this distribution is to be found in what the Chancellor of the Exchequer did two years ago in the division of the Probate Duty between the three countries in relief of local taxation. I contended that it would be fair in allotting the duty to divide it according to the amount paid on Probate Duty by each country, for Ireland in proportion paid far more than the other two countries. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reply, said that the division would be made, not in proportion to the amount paid in Probate Duty, but according to population. But in this instance nearly double the amount is given to England in proportion to population, compared with what is given to Ireland. England gets something over £1,000,000, and Ireland gets only £118,000. Though England has by far the larger population, yet the difference does not warrant such a discrepancy as lies between giving over £1,000,000 to one country and only £118,000 to the other. Though Ireland is not a great country like England, yet, when you come to deal with spirits, Ireland consumes a very much larger quantity of spirits in proportion to population than does England. But you are going to give her the least share. Ireland will pay much more than England in consumption of spirits, and will get very much less. Ireland not only consumes, but she exports whisky, and her chief customer is England. You are not only taxing whisky in Ireland, but you are checking the consumption of Irish whisky in England. I suppose the Chancellor of the Exchequer expects the people of Ireland to be grateful to him for this contribution to local needs by putting a tax of 6d. per gallon on whisky. I think they will be the reverse. Nineteen-twentieths of the taxation go to England; and every Irishman, when he drinks his glass of whisky, will think of the extreme unfairness of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in taxing Irish resources for the English majority. The Irish Members have had no opportunity of consulting about this matter, and I speak simply for myself personally. I do not oppose the Tea Tax; I take what is good in the Budget; but I oppose all the bad parts, such as that relating to silver. People have got up in this House and talked as if drink was a frightful iniquity. It is perfect hypocrisy. Why, in Sweden, where you have the best educated people, and in North Russia, where you have not the best educated people, they drink more than we do. I believe the consumption of alcohol is simply a question of latitude. It was proved by an eminent statistician lately that wherever alcohol is drunk you have very much less crime. You will never make very much difference in the consumption of alcohol. I would draw the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to one matter. Ten years ago I obtained a Return, signed by Mr. Courtney, and I have no doubt it was correct, which showed that Ireland contributed a larger share to the Imperial Revenue than the Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated. Subsequently, a Return was made by the Treasury. It was compiled at the time of the Home Rule Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) a time of heat and conflict, and when the right hon. Gentleman was anxious to make a good bargain with Ireland. Every Irishman who understood the subject knew that the right hon. Gentleman in his Home Rule Bill was driving a terribly hard bargain with Ireland. What I wish the Chancellor of the Exchequer to do is to compare the two Returns and see where they vary from each other, and ascertain what is conveyed by the one and the other as to the proportion which Ireland contributes to the Imperial Revenue compared with England.

*(11.40.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): Sir, I wish to make an appeal to the House. Unless these Resolutions are carried forthwith great inconvenience will result. Hon. Gentlemen will have a full opportunity of discussing every question on the Bill which will be based on the Resolutions, and I trust, therefore, the House will allow the Resolutions themselves to pass.

*(11.41.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): Sir, I will not detain the House more than a couple of minutes. I am not going in any way to criticise the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think it right to say, inasmuch as he alluded to my criticism on the disposal of a previous surplus that it favoured the direct rather than the indirect taxpayer, that the right hon. Gentleman has to-night done very fair justice to indirect taxation. Sir, you are going to put a Motion from the Chair for adding 6d. per gallon to spirits, and 3d. per barrel to beer, and I want the House and the Committee to understand that we are this evening imposing an additional Imperial alcoholic taxation. We reserve to ourselves the absolute right to discuss the appropriation of that taxation. Look at it in any way you like, the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is simply a subsidy from Imperial funds for certain local purposes, among others, compensation to publicans for the purchase of their licences. In voting to-night for the addition to

this duty, I want it to be distinctly understood that we are voting for an Imperial duty, and if alcohol will bear it, I shall be only too happy to put it on alcohol. It will be for the House, hereafter, to decide whether this increased taxation, amounting to a million and a-quarter, which, added to the surplus of 3¼ millions, gives a surplus of 4½ millions, is to be applied as a subsidy to local purposes. The other remark I wish to make is in consequence of the ironical cheers with which the remarks of the hon. Member (Mr. Labouchere) were received with respect to the Naval and Military expenditure. It is all very well for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to justify, in powerful and eloquent language, his disposition with reference to those items. When Lord Beaconsfield was in the height of his power the ordinary expenditure on our Army and Navy was £25,000,000. When Lord Beaconsfield left Office in 1880 it was only £25,250,000; but this year the House is going to vote £33,000,000, making, together with the £20,000,000 for the Indian Army, a normal annual expenditure of £53,300,000 in a time of peace. There may be reasons why we should endure that expenditure, and no doubt hon. Members opposite think there are; but when you have a normal military expenditure of £53,000,000 in a time of peace I defy any hon. Member to furnish a parallel to it from the Expenditure of any country in the world. I think that this is a fact that ought not to escape the attention of the House and the country.

*(11.46.) Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I shall wish, at the proper time, to take a Division on the question of the Tea Duty.

(11.46.) Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I think that in some respects the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman manifest injustice to Ireland, and though I do not propose to divide the Committee against the Resolution before it, I desire it to be understood that the Irish Members reserve to themselves the right of taking such steps as they may hereafter deem desirable in defence of the interests of their country.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I presume that the Government do not propose to take the Report of Supply to-night?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: We propose to take Report of Supply, but not to go into matters of a controversial character.

Question put, and agreed to.

CUSTOMS.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in addition to the Duties of Customs payable on Spirits under "The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881," there shall be charged and paid the Duties following (that is to say):—

	£	s.	d.
For every Gallon computed at proof of Spirits of any description as in the said Act mentioned (except Perfumed Spirits)	0	0	6
For every Gallon of Perfumed Spirits	0	0	9
For every Gallon of Liqueurs, Cordials, and other preparations entered so as to be chargeable under the said Act with the Duty of Fourteen Shillings . . .	0	0	8

and so in proportion for any less quantity.

And the Duties of Customs on the articles hereinafter mentioned, being articles of which Spirits are a part or ingredient, shall be proportionately increased, and shall be as follows:—

		£	s.	d.
Chloroform .	. the pound	0	3	1
Collodion .	. the gallon	1	5	0
Ether Acetic	. the pound	0	1	10
Ether Butyric	. the gallon	0	15	8
Ether Sulphuric	. the gallon	1	6	2
Ethyl, Iodide of	. the gallon	0	13	7

and so in proportion for any less quantity."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Colonel NOLAN: I should like to point out in reference to this Vote that the Government are proposing to tax a most useful and beneficent anæsthetic. The man who invented chloroform probably conferred greater benefit on the human race than any other inventor who ever lived. Why, I ask, is chloroform to be made the subject of taxation? Perhaps the Government will furnish some explanation of the reason why such articles are to be taxed.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The Excise Authorities find it impossible to make any difference in regard to the taxation of spirits. No change is made in regard to the law, and the increase on the existing duty is not large. I am quite sure that hon. Members will not expect me to enter into a scientific discussion on such a subject at the present moment, even if I were competent to do so.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Co., Mid): I do not think the right hon. Gentleman takes into consideration when he proposes to increase the tax on anæsthetics how important these things are in surgical operations. He has apparently forgotten that already the price of these articles is exceedingly high, and it seems to me to be unwise to still further enhance the cost of materials which are only used for the purpose of relieving pain, notably in the case of poor persons who are subject to surgical treatment. Hon. Members may not object to proposals making the consumption of intoxicating liquors as expensive as possible; but at the same time I think it will be generally granted that articles like chloroform, which are merely aids to humanity, ought to be made as cheap as possible. In increasing the cost of these things there is some risk of doing harm by adding to the inducements to adulteration.

Question put, and agreed to.

METHYLATED SPIRITS.

3. Resolved, That no drawback shall be allowed to a Rectifier of Spirits in respect of Duty-paid Spirits Methylated, after the thirtieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety.

EXCISE LICENCE.

4. Resolved, That every Excise Licence to carry on any trade or business (except the trade or business of an Appraiser, Auctioneer, or Hawker), which shall hereafter be granted, shall only authorise the person to whom the Licence is granted to carry on the trade or business mentioned therein, in one set of premises to be specified in the Licence.

PLATE DUTIES.

5. Resolved, That, from and after the thirtieth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, the Stamp Duties and the Duties of Customs now payable on Plate of Gold and Plate of Silver shall cease to be payable, and the Drawback now payable upon the exportation of Plate shall cease to be allowed; and in respect of Plate of Silver manufactured in the United Kingdom, which has not left the stock of any manufacturer or other licensed dealer in Plate, an allowance, by way of Drawback, shall be made out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof, subject to (amongst other provisions) the provisions following (that is to say):—

(a) Every licensed dealer in Plate who is entitled to make any claim for allowance shall, on or before the seventh day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, give notice of his intention to make such claim upon a form to be immediately provided and delivered to him by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue;

(b) If the aggregate number of ounces of Plate of Silver, in respect of which claims are sent in and proved to be valid and correct, is not such that the amount required to repay the Duties paid thereon would exceed the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, the whole of such Duties shall be repaid, but, if otherwise, that sum shall be distributed rateably amongst the claimants according to the number of ounces in respect whereof each of them has established his claim.

INCOME TAX.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say)—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Sixpence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Threepence;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Twopence Farthing;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixths years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty-five Pounds, and in section eight of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876,' for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I was under the impression that the Government did not propose to take this Vote to-night, and I trust it will not be insisted on.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Under the circumstances, I do not propose to press the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

TEA.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in lieu of the Duty of Customs now chargeable upon Tea, there shall be charged and paid, on and after the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, the Duty following, and such Duty shall continue to be charged and paid upon Tea imported into Great Britain and Ireland until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one (that is to say):

Tea . . . . the pound . Four Pence."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. PICTON: This is a proposal to alter a duty which has been in existence for a very long time, and I think the Committee ought to have a full opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. GOSCHEN: That opportunity will be afforded on the Report. The date fixed for the remission is the 1st of May, which is not very far ahead, and it is important that the trade should know what it has to expect.

*Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I think, under the circumstances, this Motion ought not to be pressed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow.

Committee to sit again to-morrow.

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolutions [1st April] reported (see page 416) and read the first and second time.

Resolution 1.

*(12.3.) Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I have an Amendment on the Paper "to reduce the Vote by £500 (part of Vote for Restoration of Westminster Hall)." It is not my intention to repeat the observations I have made before on the Vote, except as to one point. I, on a former occasion, called the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works to the fact that there was no accommodation for the carriages of Members of this House in Palace Yard, except a sort of cave at the North entrance, which is extremely inconvenient of access. The right hon. Gentleman then told the Committee that that cavern or receptacle was intended for horses and not for carriages at all. It will be in the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman that he promised to consider the matter to see if some arrangement could not be made for the convenience of hon. Members. I find that an Order has been issued from the Board of Works, forbidding carriages to enter the cave, and, therefore, though 8 or 10 carriages were some time ago able to seek refuge there, there is now no protection whatever for them. I should like to know why that Order has been issued? There is no danger in the matter of driving into the cavern. I tested the matter by driving a carriage into it myself, and I came to the conclusion that any well-conducted schoolboy could drive a carriage down without the least chance of accident. Therefore, I do not see why Members should not be allowed to use that receptacle if they think fit. I would point out that the interior is by no means so dangerous as the descent from the Strand, say down Buckingham Street, and I therefore do not see why we should be prevented from using this cave. I would also point out that this cave is lighted up at night. At this moment there are 14 gas lights burning in it for the sole delectation, it seems to me, of messengers belonging to the *Standard* newspaper. I have great respect for that newspaper, but I do not see why we should burn gas lights for its advantage alone, and I find that the only occupants of this place are four bicycles or velocipedes with their riders belonging to that journal. I think we might have some part of the space at the end of Westminster Hall converted into a refuge for carriages. Another point I desire to draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to is the staircases in Westminster Hall. I do not wish to repeat the arguments I have already used; but as the right hon. Gentleman has followed my advice with regard to the southern end of that Hall, I would urge him also to adopt my suggestion

with regard to these staircases. The area of the Hall need not be interfered with, nor its structure, for the alteration I propose could be brought about by removing the return staircases. For the purpose of raising a discussion, I move to reduce the Vote by the sum of £500.

Amendment proposed to the first Resolution, to leave out "£165,767," and insert "£165,267,"—(*Mr. Cavendish Bentinck,*)—instead thereof.

Question put, "That '£165,767' stand part of the Resolution."

(12.10.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): In my opinion the buildings to which the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has referred are more suited to a carriage-shed than anything else, and I hope he will be able to come to terms with the First Commissioner of Works with regard to them. I do not like this Vote to pass without raising a word of protest with regard to the restorations of Westminster Hall. I do not think anything in the way of real restoration has been done; but we have have had a building put up more like a second-rate dissenting church than anything else—a structure which is a disgrace to this House, which has no perspective, and which is as defective in architectural beauty as any average dissenting church. As to the interior of Westminster Hall, I would ask whether it would not be possible to reduce that meretricious piece of architecture which has been called "Spurgeon's pulpit" there?

*(12.12.) THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): I will undertake respectfully to consider any plan the right hon. Gentleman may suggest for the improvement of the interior of Westminster Hall or any other building. If the hon. Member (Sir G. Campbell) has any design to propose to improve the beauty of that part of the Hall lately restored, it shall receive every attention if he will lay it before me. As to the accommodation for horses, I should be very glad if something could be done, and I will take care that the matter is not lost sight of. I should be sorry, however, to set up any temporary shed which would have the effect of disfiguring the place. Also I am afraid it would be impossible to provide any large amount of accommodation for carriages—especially carriages with pairs of horses. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) says in regard to the "cave" to which he has referred that he himself has driven down it, and that there is no danger in so doing; but I certainly think it would be dangerous if a large number of spirited animals were congregated there. If the right hon. Gentleman can suggest an alternative scheme to that we have carried out, I shall be very glad to consider it.

(12.15.) MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I do not think there is any good in crying over spilt milk. We must make the best of what we have got. I think the right hon. Gentleman might make a way for carriages to go into this place by taking down the low wall in front of it, lowering the level of the yard, and making an exit at the end opposite the present entrance. It is really useless in these days to provide accommodation for the horses of Members. It is, however, highly desirable that some shelter should be provided for carriages. A suggestion has been made that a temporary shed should be put up opposite the entrance to the House of Commons for the accommodation of carriages. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will consider that suggestion, and endeavour to provide accommodation.

(12.17.) The House proceeded to a Division.

Mr. Akers-Douglas and Sir William Walrond were appointed Tellers for the Ayes, but no Members being willing to act as Tellers for the Noes, Mr. Speaker declared that the Ayes had it.

Resolution agreed to.

Second, Third, and Fourth Resolutions agreed to.

Fifth Resolution postponed.

Subsequent Resolutions agreed to.

Postponed Resolution to be considered upon Monday next.

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS (BOROUGH OF BELFAST) BILL.—(No. 153.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—*(Mr. Macartney.)*

DR. TANNER : I object.

MR. SEXTON : This is a Bill to adjust, I believe in an equitable sense, the cost of the registration of voters in the Borough of Belfast, in consequence of an addition to the borough, and I think my hon. Friend might agree to the Second Reading.

*MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) : I am quite willing to name a day which will give time for considering Amendments. I intend to submit them to the hon. Member for West Belfast in case the Second Reading be taken to-night.

DR. TANNER : Of course, if my hon. Friend is willing, and if the hon. Gentleman will acquaint my hon. Friend with all the steps that are taken, I will trust him so far.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and Committed for Monday, 5th May.

POST OFFICE MAIL CONTRACTS. (AUSTRALIAN MAILS.)

Resolved, That the Contracts with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, dated the 19th January, 1888, and the Orient Steam Navigation Company, dated the 23rd January, 1888, for the conveyance of the Australian Mails, be approved.—*(Mr. Jackson.)*

LAND PURCHASE AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL, 1890.

Return ordered—

"Showing approximately the Amounts and Distribution of the Imperial Annual Grants to Ireland for local purposes, proposed to be dealt with under the Cash and Contingent portions, respectively, of the Guarantee Fund."

"And, Table illustrative of the operation of the proposed provision for creating a Tenants' Insurance Fund."—*(Mr. Arthur Balfour.)*

Return presented accordingly ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 134.]

MOTIONS.

TOWN HOLDINGS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lawson, Bill to give compensation to occupying tenants of Town Holdings for beneficial improvements, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lawson, Earl Compton, and Mr. James Rowlands.

Bill presented, and read first time.[Bill 227.]

ROCHESTER BISHOPRIC BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Gorst, Bill to amend "The Bishopric of St. Alban's Act, 1875," as regards the Bishopric of Rochester, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Gorst, Sir John Mowbray, Mr. Cubitt, Mr. Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen, and Mr. Causton.

Bill presented, and read first time.[Bill 228.]

IRELAND—FUNERAL OF MR. M. HARRIS—CONDUCT OF POLICE.

On the Motion for the Adjournment of the House :—

MR. SEXTON : I should like to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether he has any information as to the circumstances of the funeral of a late Member of this House, Mr. Matthew Harris, whose death is, I am sure, regretted by hon. Members on both sides of the House. I am informed that a body of policemen, armed with batons, and accompanied by a note-taker, broke into the churchyard and remained there during the interment.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University) : I have no information to that effect. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put a question down for to-morrow.

DR. TANNER : Has the right hon. Gentleman any information concerning the action of some drunken policemen who followed and insulted the hon. Member for Spalding (Mr. Halley Stewart) while driving to Cashel ?

MR. MADDEN : I have no information.

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 18th April, 1890.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Ashburton, after the death of his father.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL BILL—(No. 12.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*The Bishop of **LICHFIELD**: The Bill which I ask your Lordships to read a second time to-night is so simple in its character, and so obvious in its purpose that it will require the fewest possible words of explanation. By various Statutes passed within the last 150 years, some of the prebendal stalls in the Cathedral Church of Lichfield have been attached to Canonries, and some to benefices, for the purpose of increasing the endowment of these benefices. As the prebendal stalls have now ceased, as your Lordships are aware, to have any income attached to them, the purpose for which they were thus annexed has come to an end, and it is very desirable that appointments may be made to fill up the number of Canonries in the Cathedral. That really is the whole purpose of this Bill, and the method by which it is proposed to proceed is, to authorise and give power to the Lichfield Cathedral Chapter to frame a Statute or Statutes with a view to accomplishing these objects. I move, my Lords, that this Bill be now read a second time.

Read 2ª (according to order), and committed to the Standing Committee for General Bills.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, That the Committee have added the Lord Bishop of Lichfield to the Standing Committee for General Bills for the consideration of the Lichfield Cathedral Bill; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 18th April, 1890.

QUESTIONS.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

Mr. **LLEWELLYN** (Somerset, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the fact that in some places where the population is less than 10,000, there exists more than one branch of the Volunteer Service; and whether, since such an arrangement may interfere with the efficiency of the several corps affected, he can provide a remedy?

*The **SECRETARY** of **STATE** for **WAR** (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): In the early days of the Volunteer Force the raising of corps was sanctioned in particular localities mainly with reference to local wishes. Now, however, that mobilisation for home defence is the principal consideration, only those corps are allowed which suit the scheme of defence of the particular district. There are difficulties in changing a corps from one arm of the Service to another; and local prejudices have also to be fully allowed for. But I cordially sympathise with the suggestion of my hon. Friend, and shall be glad to consider in any particular case whether we cannot do something to meet the difficulty.

THE BELL ROCK LIGHTHOUSE.

Mr. **LENG** (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received any detailed statement explaining the circumstances attending the explosion of a fog signal at the Bell Rock Lighthouse, on the night of the 5th April, which extinguished the lights, and is reported to have shattered the glass, wrecked the dome, and deranged the lighting apparatus; whether he will state for how many successive nights the usual lights have not been exhibited, and whether this is the first occasion on which the lighthouse has been in darkness since its first illumination on the 10th February, 1811; whether the regulations of the Board of

Trade permit that explosive fog signals should be worked in proximity to the lighting apparatus; and whether precautions will be taken for the future in this and other lighthouses against the recurrence of a casualty which, by extinguishing an important light, might be followed by serious peril to vessels approaching the British coasts?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The Scottish Lighthouses are under the management of the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, who have forwarded a lengthy Report upon the subject, from which it appears that the usual light was not exhibited at the Bell Rock from the 5th to the 12th of April, that is, for eight nights, and that this is the only occasion on which the lighthouse has been in darkness since it was first lighted. The regulations made, not by the Board of Trade, but by the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, do provide for the explosive signal being fired only when at a due and safe distance outside of and above the lighting apparatus. The regulations were, however, not carried out, and the Commissioners have directed their engineer to report whether such a modification of the fog signal apparatus can be made as will render impossible the recurrence of a similar accident.

THE CARLISLE RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps he proposes to take respecting the fatal railway accident at Carlisle on 4th March, with special reference to the evidence given that the defective brake had proved defective at Northampton in 1889; and also having regard to the following sentence in the verdict of the Coroner's Jury:—

> "We are further of opinion that the London and North-Western Railway Company incurred a very grave responsibility in using a brake of such an uncertain and unreliable character"?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Until I have received and had time to consider the Report of the Inspecting Officer appointed to inquire into the circumstances attending the accident referred to by the hon. Member, I am not in a position to make any statement. I am informed that the Report will be ready in a few days, and I will at once lay it on the Table of the House.

PARCELS POST—DEFECTIVE SERVICE.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether complaints have reached him that a parcel of winter underclothing was sent from the Strand to Upper Street, Islington, a distance of two miles, on the 20th December last, but was undelivered up to the 8th January; whether the Post Office Authorities refused to make any compensation, as other carriers must have done, for the loss caused by the delay; and if it be true that the Departmental excuse was that the parcel had no address on it; and, if so, how it found its way to the Northern District post office; and whether, prior to its delivery, its original wrapper had been removed and another substituted?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): The non-delivery in due course of the parcel referred to by the hon. Member arose from the absence of an address. How the address became detached in course of post is not known. It was apparently written on a label, which, presumably, was not firmly attached to the parcel. The enclosing of the parcel in a fresh cover was an act of grace on the part of the Post Office for the greater security of the parcel, and for enabling the address, when ultimately furnished by the sender, to be written upon it. No blame attaches to the Department, and no grounds for compensation exist.

IRELAND—THE REV. J. BROWN, C.C.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Rev. J. Brown, C.C. of Ramsgrange, County Wexford, has received a communication from the Resident Magistrate of the district, informing him that he would be followed by the police if he did not refrain from holding meetings of the National League; and whether, in pursuance of this threat, it is true that a police constable followed Father Brown into the house of a dying woman; and, if so, whether the police acted in accordance with their instructions; and whether this part of the County Wexford is quite free from crime?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am informed that the communication referred to in the question was made, not by the Resident Magistrate, but by the Divisional Commissioner. It was to the effect that the rev. gentleman would be watched if he did not refrain from holding unlawful meetings. That part of the County Wexford is free from crime classed in the Returns as agrarian. Whether it is free from intimidation or other illegal conspiracies I cannot say without further inquiry.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): A criminal prosecution having failed against this rev. gentleman, is it desirable that he should be spied upon and followed by the police?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I presume that the usual course has been followed where a person is suspected of holding illegal meetings.

MR. W. REDMOND: Is the right hon. Gentleman in possession of evidence that this gentleman has been engaged in holding illegal meetings; and, if so, why have not proceedings been taken against him in the ordinary way? Why should his life be rendered miserable by the police dogging him about day after day?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot say whether this gentleman has not persisted in holding illegal meetings or not.

LAND COMMISSION—FERMANAGH.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that great dissatisfaction exists amongst the tenant farmers of Fermanagh owing to the fact that the Sub-Commissioners have not been to the County Fermanagh since November, 1888; and whether it is a fact that there were several cases in which notices to fix fair rents in Fermanagh were served as far back as October, 1887, and which have not yet been heard?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners report that a Sub-Commission sat in the county in October, November, and December, 1888. There are in the county 69 cases undisposed of, in which the originating notices were received before the 31st October, 1887. A Sub-Commission will shortly sit in Enniskillen to hear cases from the county.

MR. W. REDMOND: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman, in view of the great dissatisfaction which exists, will use his influence in having these cases heard at once, especially those which originated so far back as 1887?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no control over the movements of the Land Commission; but I have no doubt that the Commissioners will take into account the circumstances of the case.

ORANGE JURORS AT DERRY ASSIZES.

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, with reference to the trial and conviction at the recent Derry Assizes of the parties found guilty under "The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1887," for offences in the nature of intimidation and boycotting, as to which it was alleged that the greater number of the jury who tried the prisoners were Orangemen, he has been able to make inquiries as to the truth of such allegation; whether his attention has been called to the declaration signed by the whole of the jury engaged in such trial in the following terms:—

> "We, the undersigned members of the jury in the case of the boycotting of the Great Northern Railway at Carrickmacross, beg to say that we are not Orangemen, nor have we ever had any connection with the institution;"

and whether he has reason to believe in the truthfulness of such declaration?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The trial referred to was under the ordinary law. I have no official information as to the religious denomination or particular party to which jurors may belong. But my attention has been called to the declaration in the public Press mentioned by my hon. Friend, in which all the members of the jury engaged in the trial referred to deny specifically as a matter of fact the allegation that any of them happened at the time or previously to belong to the Orange Institution. I have no reason to doubt the truthfulness of such declaration.

MR. SEXTON: As the Society is a secret one, what reason can the right hon. Gentleman have either one way or the other? Is he not aware of the secret nature of the organisation of the Orange Society?

*MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Is there any reason to believe that, if the gentlemen referred to had been members of the Orange Institution, they would have disregarded the sanctity of their oath?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I feel quite unequal to answering all these questions. I know nothing of the constitution of the Orange Society. What I said was that I had no reason to doubt the truth of the declaration made by the jury.

CAPTAIN RYE.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether the attention of the Lord Chancellor has been directed to the fact that Captain Richard John Rye, D.L., of Rye Court, Cookstown, County Cork, has, after three days' trial before the Cookstown Bench of Magistrates, been returned for trial to next Cork Assizes charged with a felonious assault; and whether it is the intention of the Lord Chancellor to continue Captain Rye in the Commission of the Peace?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Lord Chancellor is aware of the fact mentioned; but he is of opinion that it would not be proper for him to take any present action which would be calculated to prejudice the trial of the case.

DR. TANNER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this is not the first accusation of a similar assault against Captain Rye?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware; but even if it were true it would not affect the decision of the Lord Chancellor.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that on the 26th March last, Mr. John Rye, D.L., moved and succeeded in carrying the rejection of a poor man named Corcoran's application for outdoor relief at the Bandon Board of Guardians, which application was made in consequence of Corcoran not being able to work, being severely wounded by Mr. Rye's father, Captain R. Rye, D.L, who was lately returned for trial for this felonious assault; and whether it is in his power to take any action in the matter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Member will refer to the reply given by me to his question on this subject asked on 31st March, he will find that the allegation he now makes as to Corcoran's application for relief having been rejected on 26th March is not a fact. On the contrary, this man's allowance of 5s. a week was then continued, and has since continued.

DR. TANNER: Is not the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. John Rye moved and succeeded in carrying the rejection of relief to this poor man on the day in question? If he will make inquiry he will find that the application for outdoor relief was made and officially rejected on the 26th of March. Will the right hon. Gentleman cause some inquiry to be made into the action of Mr. Rye on this occasion in endeavouring to defeat justice in the case of his father, Captain Rye, now charged with a felonious assault and attempt to murder?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware of the facts of the case.

DR. TANNER: Am I to understand, from the reply of the right hon. Gentleman, that Captain Rye did not fire upon this man on two occasions?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman put a question upon the Paper in regard to the refusal of relief, and he now puts a rider to the question about somebody else—a third person.

DR. TANNER: Mr. Speaker, I must ask——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

DR. TANNER: But I want to know——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE FUNERAL OF MR. M. HARRIS—CONDUCT OF THE POLICE.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, yesterday, at Ballinasloe, the police demanded accommodation for a police reporter at the funeral of Mr. Matthew Harris, M.P., and upon being informed that such a demand was regarded as an outrage, broke into the graveyard in force, armed with batons, and accompanied by a body of detectives and of note-takers, and remained there until after the interment?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not yet been able to receive any information upon this matter. If I receive it in time I will answer the question later on.

Mr. SEXTON: I must protest against the delay, seeing that London is in direct communication with Dublin and Ballinasloe, and I beg to give notice that I will raise the question of the indignity offered to the dead body of my hon. Friend on the Motion that Mr. Speaker leave the Chair for the purpose of going into Committee of Ways and Means.

THE ASHBOURNE ACTS.

Mr. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in reference to the 12 holdings which are stated to have been the subject of default after sale under the Ashbourne Acts, if he will state their original sale price under these Acts, and the amount advanced on them, also whether they were all put up for sale again after the default; how many were re-sold; how much did they realise as compared with the original sale price; and, if any loss has been incurred, to what account has it been debited?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners do not resume possession of holdings under Section 3 of the Act of 1885. All holdings put up for sale for default in payment of instalments are so put up subject to the future instalments of the annuity payable in redemption of the original purchase-money. Of the 12 cases referred to in the question nine have been sold, and three, as I understand, remain unsold. In the nine cases the purchase money was £9,579. The fresh purchasers paid £501, subject to the redemption of the original purchase money, as above stated.

Mr. KEAY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will explain to the House why, instead of the Return moved for by the right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley) of the names of the landowners in Ireland, "the purchase of whose property has been sanctioned by the Irish Land Commission," a Return, No. 115, has been presented giving the particulars of "completed sales" only; whether this circumstance explains the fact that the total amount shown to have been advanced under the Ashbourne Acts, both in the Return in question and in No. 81, of which it is a continuation, is £5,123,479 only; and whether he will lay upon the Table the additional particulars necessary to show how and to whom the remaining funds available under the above-named Acts, amounting to nearly £5,000,000, have been or are now being allotted?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Return was limited as described because the provisional sanction of the Commissioners is not always followed by a completion of the transaction, as it sometimes happens that one or other of the parties either cannot or will not fully comply with the necessary conditions. The Commissioners considered that the names of the applicants in cases not yet complete should not be included. All finally sanctioned cases are included, and they make up the total figure given in the Return. A monthly Return is laid on the Table of the House, and the latest of these Returns shows that up to the end of February the total amount applied for was £8,393,000, while the advances provisionally sanctioned amounted to £6,760,000.

THE CLONGOREY PRISONERS.

Mr. CAREW (Kildare, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the following Report of Mr. McCarthy, Visiting Justice to Grangegorman Prison on the condition of the infant child of Mrs. Morrissey, one of the Clongorey prisoners—

> "I notice a marked change for the worse in the appearance of Mary Morrissey's child. Long confinement in a small cell is evidently telling on her, and if continued will, in my opinion, have a very serious effect;"

and whether, under the circumstances, he will recommend the immediate release of both mother and child?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board report that the Medical Officer of the prison does not entertain a serious view of the condition of the child. Should, however, he be of opinion that further confinement would endanger its health the matter will be at once brought before the committing Judge. It is not the case that the prisoner and her child are confined in a small cell.

The prisoner is treated as a first-class misdemeanant, and, as a matter of fact, is permitted to have a small range consisting of four cells during the day. The cell in which she and the child are placed in at night is of good dimensions and well heated and ventilated.

Mr. SEXTON: Is it not the fact that this woman is in prison for contempt of an order in regard to a farm of which she was not the tenant, and that the child is only about two months old?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: From the answer I have received from the Prison Authorities, it appears neither the mother nor the child is in danger; and as the woman is in prison for contempt of Court it is a matter which is entirely in the hands of the Judge who committed her.

THE LANDED ESTATES COURT.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will lay upon the Table a Return of Irish Estates in the Landed Estates Court for sale, showing the location of each estate, the name of the landlord, the rateable valuation, the actual present rental, the highest offer made in each case in which there has been any offer of purchase, and the period for which each estate has been in the hands of the Court? I have put down this question again in order to ascertain from the right hon. Gentleman what part of the information he is prepared to give.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Registrar to the Land Judge reports that the means do not exist in this Court of giving the rateable valuation, the actual present rental, or the highest offer made in each case in which there has been any offer. The rest of the question could be answered, but would take a long time, and would probably show no useful information, as it would include both sold and unsold land, and all kinds of tenures, life estates, short leases, &c., as well as fee-simple estates. If it were required to give only unsold lands it would take a still longer time to make the Return, which in no event could be completed before the end of the present Session, as each case would have to be minutely examined to ascertain what, if any, part of it had been sold. The Argyll Return might possibly give some information on the subject.

Mr. SEXTON: I submit that in considering the Land Purchase Bill it is indispensable that the House should know what prices were offered in Court; and I would press on the right hon. Gentleman the desirability of furnishing this information in some form or other.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall be glad to give every information to the House in regard to any part of the Land Bill that will tend to elucidate the measure; but, from the answer which the Land Court has given me, I am not very hopeful that this particular information can be given.

THE COINAGE.

Mr. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware of the great inconvenience that is at present caused by a large part of the coinage of this Country not having on either the obverse or the reverse side the value clearly marked; and whether he will undertake that all coins to be issued from the Mint in future shall bear legibly upon either the obverse or the reverse side the denomination of their exact value?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I would refer the hon. Gentleman to an answer given by me on the 14th of March of this year, in which I pointed out that the question of the denomination of the value of silver coins was under consideration.

Mr. COGHILL: Is not Great Britain the only country in the world where the gold coins are not marked with their value?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Every one knows what a sovereign is, and I have never before heard any complaint with reference to its value not being marked.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): When will the decision with reference to the silver coins take effect?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The existing stock must be dealt with first, and there are other matters connected with the design, &c., which will be attended to at the same time.

Mr. COGHILL: Is not the Australian sovereign marked with its value?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; but I do not think that the Australians can give us lessons with regard to our coinage.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACT.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Solicitor General for Scotland if he will state to the House the total amount of assessment levied in Scotland under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act in each of the last five years, giving separately the amount raised by assessment by Burgh and County Local Authority in each of said five years?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. M. T. Stormonth Darling, Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews): The amount of assessment levied under these Acts in Scotland, as shown by the Local Taxation Returns, was — In 1884-5, counties, £7,802, burghs, £3,232; 1885-6, counties, £10,637, burghs, £2,401; 1886-7, counties, £12,570, burghs, £4,722; 1887-8, counties, £29,931, burghs, £8,776; 1888-9, counties, £27,286, burghs, £9,580. The totals for these years respectively being — £11,034, £13,038, £17,292, £38,707, £36,866.

Mr. CALDWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board the total amount of the assessment raised under the Contagious Diseases Animals Acts in England and Wales during each of the last five years, stating separately the amount raised during each of said five years by Burgh and by County Local Authority?

The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Long, Wilts, Devizes): The only information which I can give is as to the expenditure of the Local Authorities in England and Wales under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts during the five years 1884-1888 according to the Local Taxation Returns. The expenditure of the County Authorities during each of the years was:—1883-4, £78,334; 1884-5, £49,558; 1885-6, £68,464; 1886-7, £81,347; 1887-8, £63,334. The expenditure incurred in Municipal Boroughs, in other Sanitary Districts, and in the Metropolis was: — 1883-4, £14,705; 1884-5, £13,018; 1885-6, £17,471; 1886-7, £17,573; 1887-8, £17,784.

Sir J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): Does that include payment for animals slaughtered?

Mr. LONG: It includes the entire expenditure.

PRISON DISCIPLINE.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will put a stop to the practice which exists, contrary to the spirit of the Prison Act, of placing three prisoners in one cell, in consequence of which practice one prisoner was murdered about two years ago in Armley Gaol, Leeds, and which same custom called forth a public protest from Mr. Justice Hawkins, at the Derbyshire Assizes held this month, when it was stated in evidence that in Derby Gaol recently two prisoners had, for more than a week, been placed in the same cell with a man who had committed murder, and was insane?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): The case alluded to by my right hon. Friend as having occurred at Derby is now under investigation by an Inspector, who has been sent down specially to inquire into all the circumstances. The practice of placing prisoners in association when one of them is epileptic or requires supervision is expressly allowed by the Prison Act of 1865, which leaves it to the medical officer to determine the cases in which it is proper to resort to the system of association. The Orders of the Home Office have since 1884 provided that where a prisoner is insane he shall be under the personal supervision of officers or hired attendants, and not of other prisoners. The Prison Commissioners are informed by the medical officer of Derby Gaol that the man alluded to was not insane. This is one of the matters that the Inspector is inquiring into.

MINES INSPECTORS' REPORTS.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will inform the House when the Statistical Abstract of the Mines Inspectors' Reports for the year ending 1889 will be issued; and whether he will hasten the issue of the complete Reports of the Mines Inspectors for 1889, so that they may be in the hands of the Members of this House before the Votes on the Home Office are taken?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The Abstract has been presented to Parliament, and will be ready for distribution in the course of next week. Steps have been taken to forward as much as possible the printing and issuing of the Reports of 1889.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Reports for 1888 were not issued until the House had risen last year? A promise was given by the right hon. Gentleman that he would use his best efforts to accelerate the presentation of these Reports.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I said that I would do all in my power to press forward the Reports, and I have done so.

HALL MARKING OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the compulsory hall marking of gold and silver plate shall continue, in the interests of the public, and of honesty of manufacture, regulations will be framed, notwithstanding the remission of the duty, to provide for the British hall marking of imported plate?

*Mr. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): Why is it that imported foreign silver plate is not required to be marked? Why should it be treated in a different way from gold watch cases and other articles that are imported, and why should it not be marked with different standards?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I am not prepared to answer the questions of the hon. Member for Whitechapel (Mr. Montagu). In regard to the question of the hon. and gallant Member behind me (Mr. H. Vincent), it is our intention to retain the present system of compulsory hall marking for foreign imported silver plate, subject to the remarks which I made yesterday as to the hall marking of Indian plate at the rupee standard.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: As the Government deprived me of the opportunity of raising this very question early in the Session, will the right hon. Gentleman give me an opportunity of making a representation to him of the objections felt to compulsory hall marking, especially as affecting Indian silver?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: If the hon. Gentleman wishes to make a representation, either formal or informal, I will give him every consideration; but the hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity of being heard if any change of legislation is required in consequence of the abolition of the Plate Duty.

CLERKS TO COUNTY JUSTICES.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Attorney General when he proposes to introduce his promised Bill to prohibit clerks to County Justices from conducting prosecutions at Assizes or Quarter Sessions in cases committed by the Bench of Magistrates for whom they act?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. Webster, Isle of Wight): In reply to the hon. and learned Member I have to say that the matter has been carefully considered; but it involves so much difficulty in connection with the due conduct of cases in remote country districts that Her Majesty's Government have not, at present, been able to devise any scheme which is entirely satisfactory, and I cannot undertake to introduce any Bill this Session.

THE BUDGET PROPOSITIONS.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON: Considering that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has a large surplus, will the Government be willing to grant better postal facilities for Wick and the North of Scotland?

*Mr. RAIKES: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to give notice of that question.

In reply to Mr. Howard Vincent,

*Mr. GOSCHEN said: The allocation of the Scotch portion of the grant has not yet been finally determined. The Scotch Office is considering the matter.

*Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): Are we to understand that the mode of distribution in Scotland is not prejudged by the fact that in England a portion is to go in buying up licences? Will the distribution in Scotland be dealt with by a Bill, so that the Scotch Members may be heard upon the question?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: No, Sir; we propose that Scotland, England, and Ireland shall be dealt with in the same measure, which will facilitate the proceedings; but the same principles may not be acted upon in regard to the three countries. There may be such variations as circumstances may suggest. The hon. Member need not think that the question has been settled yet, as far as the distribution in Scotland is concerned.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): May I ask whether, as the right hon. Gentleman states that the application of the money in Scotland has not yet been determined, he means that the Scotch Members will have an opportunity of expressing their views on the subject before the question is settled?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The Scotch Members must take their chance in the same way as other Members of the House. The Government have paid special attention to the case of Scotland in the matter, and the allocation must be proposed on our own responsibility.

In reply to Sir W. Lawson (Cumberland, Cockermouth),

*Mr. GOSCHEN said: I must answer the question of the hon. Baronet with caution. He asks me whether it is intended that public money should be paid for the supposed value of licences, the renewal of which is in the discretion of the magistrates. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am in the habit of taking considerable notice of the houses in question as regards Probate Duty and Income Tax, Schedule A. A particular value is considered to attach to public-houses, and I must, therefore, demur to the expression "supposed value." A portion of the money which I described last night is intended for the purchase of houses which are considered to be of a known value, not a supposed value.

Sir W. LAWSON: Is it intended by the Government scheme that licences granted annually shall be treated as a freehold?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: No; I should demur to any such inference. The value would depend on what business was done. It will be dealt with as a matter of commercial regulations. It is voluntary on the part of the County Councils to purchase the licences; but it is well-known that these houses have a certain value which for years has been subject to taxation.

THE IRISH LAND PURCHASE BILL.

Sir G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): Will the Chief Secretary for Ireland give an assurance to the House that the Paper which has been referred to in connection with the state of the Irish Church Funds will be presented on Monday morning?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe that every Paper will be in the Vote Office in the course of an hour or two.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the Land Bill be taken as the first Order on Monday?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Copy ordered—

"Of Returns of Accidents and Casualties, as reported to the Board of Trade by the several Railway Companies in the United Kingdom, during the year ending 31st December, 1889, together with Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department to the Board of Trade upon certain Accidents which were inquired into."—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.—(No. 137.)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection that they had discharged Sir Robert Fowler from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, in respect of the Bankruptcy Bill, and had appointed in substitution Mr. Gainsford Bruce.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 5).

Order for Second Reading (30th April) read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

BI-METALLISM.

*(4.15.) MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): In moving the Resolution of which I have given notice, I ask the indulgence of the House while I try to lay before it, as succinctly as I can, a very intricate and, at the same, a very important question. The subject was discussed last year briefly and inadequately, and I raise it now in order that we may have a more exhaustive debate and that I may take the sense of the House upon it. To show the keen interest felt in it, I may say that no fewer than 140 Petitions had been presented to the House in favour of my proposal from many of the most important industial centres of the Kingdom, from chambers of commerce and chambers of agriculture, from working men's societies, and various industrial interests, and the signatures attached amount to no fewer than 60,000. For the sake of clearness I will divide the subject into three heads—first, the advantage of the old bi-metallic system of Europe; secondly, the evils which arose from its rupture; and thirdly, the practicability and desirability of re-establishing it. The custom of mankind since the origin of civilisation has been to use gold and silver alike as standard money tied together by a ratio fixed by law. This ratio did not vary much from 10 or 11 of silver to 1 of gold, or as 11 to 1 under the Greek and Roman Empires, and during the Middle Ages down to the discovery of America, it remained very steady. For nearly 2,000 years silver was the money of the world. Then, owing to the enormous supplies of silver from the mines of Potosi, it gradually altered in the course of a century to 15 to 1, at which it continued with little alteration for 200 years prior to 1873. So steady was the ratio that the Royal Commission on the Currency, which reported two years ago, unanimously stated (page 2)—

> "From the middle of the 17th century the relative value of the two metals did not vary much more than 3 per cent in either direction until the recent divergence began to manifest itself in 1873."

We have frequently had, in a single year, since 1873, greater variations between gold and silver than in the whole 200 years before that date, and it must be obvious that a totally new influence has come into play. Let me point out the distinction that existed between the bi-metallism that prevailed before this century, and that which came into force in France from 1803 to 1873. The old bi-metallism of Europe was a very rude and unscientific system. There was no unity of action among the nations; each adopted and changed its ratio at will; one nation had 15 to 1; another, like England in the last century, had 15·21 to 1, as fixed by Sir Isaac Newton in 1717; others had 14$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1, and so on. Silver was the principal money, and gold was rated to it; besides there was no open Mints, with unlimited coinage of either metal, which is the absolute condition of effective bi-metallism. The various countries coined a certain amount of either metal as suited them, and each metal naturally gravitated to the centres where it was most highly valued. No doubt many and great inconveniences resulted from this form of bi-metallism, yet it gave the world the inestimable advantage of keeping both metals in circulation at very nearly a fixed par of exchange. The second period of bi-metallism was the French system from 1803 to 1873, which was far more scientific, and far more successful in binding the two metals together. The ratio adopted was 15$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, and so successful was that system in preventing fluctuations, that the extreme variation in the London Market between the metals in 70 years was from 15·21 to 15·90, and these variations are easily accounted for by the fact that England became a gold using country by the Act of 1816, and when silver was wanted for export to India it had to be imported from France at a considerable cost of transit, insurance and other exchange charges. These charges fully explain the slight fluctuations in the London market. There must also be borne in mind the extraordinary strain to which the French system was put during these 70 years. In the early part of that period the yield of gold was extremely small, say £2,000,000 a year against £6,000,000, of silver. England resumed specie payments in 1821, and so drained the Continent of gold, and there were times when a small premium on gold was charged in France for export, very seldom going as high as 1 per cent. or 2 per cent. Then came the gold discoveries of California and Australia, which raised the yield of gold to £30,000,000 annually against £8,000,000 of silver, and in 20 years doubled the gold supply of the world, yet the ratio remained unchanged. The French system acted as an equalising machine, and the vast supply of gold was diffused through the world without disturbing the relative values of the metals. In 1865 a combination of States joined France, and formed what is called the Latin Union, under similar conditions of coinage. Can anyone doubt that the French system saved Europe from a violent dislocation of gold and silver at the time of the Californian and Australian gold discoveries. If gold had then been demonetised to the extent that silver has recently been demonetised, we should have seen just as heavy a fall in gold measured by silver as we have recently seen in silver measured by gold. The ratio would have gone to 10 to 1 in place of remaining at 15½ to 1. We should have seen gold debts lightened and silver debts enhanced, just as we have recently seen gold debts enhanced and silver debts lightened. Can anyone doubt that the maintainance of the French system was an enormous gain to the cause of justice and fair play, as well as to international commerce. This country reaped all the advantages of bi-metallism, though mono-metallic itself; it had only to send its gold to Paris and get silver; or send silver and get gold, and so it could carry on its trade with India and China and South America as safely as if they all had identical money. We had virtually a par of exchange all the world over, to the enormous advantage of this country, the chief trader with the silver-using countries. I know that the great objection brought against our plan is that we attempt to do what is impossible. It is alleged that we are trying to tie together by law two commodities which constantly vary both in extent and cost of production. We are constantly told that the law can no more fix the ratio between gold and silver than between coal and iron, or between wheat and barley. I reply that the experience of the French system proves that the thing can be done in spite of the greatest fluctuations in supply ever known in the history of the world. And the reason is this: Monetary Law constitutes the chief demand for the precious metals. The tastes or desires of individual consumers constitute the demand for other commodities, but the Mint is the chief demand for either gold or silver. If the leading nations close their Mints against gold, it goes down relatively to silver; if they close their Mints against silver it goes down relatively to gold; if they keep open large bi-metallic Mints, with unlimited coinage of both metals at a fixed ratio, they virtually fix that ratio for the whole world. The finding of the Royal Commission on this head is clear and unanimous. They say:—

> "Now undoubtedly the date which forms the dividing line between an epoch of approximate fixity in the relative value of Gold and Silver and one of marked instability is the year when the bi-metallic system which had previously been in force in the Latin Union ceased to be in full operation; and we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that the operation of that system, established as it was in countries the population and commerce of which were considerable, exerted a material influence upon the relative value of the two metals. So long as that system was in force we think that, notwithstanding the changes in the production and use of the precious metals, it kept the market price of silver approximately steady at the ratio fixed by law between them, namely, 15½ to 1."

That is the finding of the Commission, presided over by Lord Herschell, and signed by my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock). I cannot imagine how any fair-minded person who has studied the evidence can come to any other conclusion. Nothing more clearly illustrates the inveterate prejudice of the banking and financial class on this subject than their refusal to admit for many years that the French system had anything to do with the stability between gold and silver prior to 1873, I freely grant that there are some things which the law cannot do; it cannot fix the value of the precious metals as compared with other commodities. That depends upon many things, one of which is the supply of the precious metals. In the Middle Ages so scarce was that supply that a quarter of wheat sometimes sold at five shillings, and labourers' wages were two shillings per week. Then the discovery of the South American mines took place in the 16th century, and a great flood of the precious metals went through Europe, and prices rose four-fold. Again, after the gold discoveries in California and Australia, when once more a great flood of the precious metals flowed over Europe, prices rose 40 per cent., and I would especially call the attention of the hon. Member for Leeds to this fact, and also to the fact that this occurred simultaneously with a great reduction in the cost of production, owing to such modern inventions as railways, steam boats, and telegraphs. According to all ordinary laws, prices ought to have fallen, but instead of that they steadily rose, with occasional fluctuations, until, in 1873, they were 40 per cent. higher than they were in 1848. Then, I would ask attention to this fact. There followed a strain on gold and the demonetisation of silver, and prices kept falling for 15 years until they got below the point at which they stood in 1848. Articles have been written in the magazines to prove that the whole fall in prices is due to the fact of the discovery of economising expedients—better machinery. I would ask the House why prices steadily rose for 25 years to the extent of 40 per cent., whilst the modern economising systems of production were in operation — how came it that the values governed by gold and silver rose under these economising processes? The House must feel the force of this query. All that the law can do is to give monetary power to gold alone, or to silver alone, or tie both together under a bi-metallic system. Now, let me ask the House to look at the advantages of the old bi-metallic system. We are the great traders with the silver-using countries, which contain a population of nine hundred millions of people. They are our best customers, because they have light duties and few manufactures of their own; they need capital to develop them, we have it to spare; they are constant borrowers in the London market, and so long as gold and silver were tied together they could safely borrow, with interest payable in gold, because they always knew that a certain amount of silver would exchange against a fixed amount of gold. India borrowed largely under this system, and a vast amount of private capital was invested in all these countries, and no inconvenience was caused until the bi-metallic system was abandoned in 1873. I may mention that the exports from the United Kingdom ran up, under that system, from £63,000,000 in 1849 to £255,000,000 in 1873, from which they fell back to £212,000,000 in 1886, and last year recovered to £248,000,000. We had no trouble with the finances of India up to that date, whereas the House knows well that since that time we have had endless deficits and the greatest difficulties. I think I have proved my first point, that the old bi-metallic system worked well for the whole world, but especially for England, the great trader with the silver-using countries. Now let me deal with the second point, namely, the evils that arose from the rupture of the bi-metallic system. It is not necessary to remind the House of the intolerable depression of trade that set in about 1874, when the Mints of France and the Latin Union were practically closed to the coinage of silver. This depression lasted, almost without interruption, till 1887. It was accompanied by an enormous fall of prices, say 30 to 40 per cent., bringing up to the lowest level known in this century; and it produced immense suffering in nearly all our industrial centres, and among the agricultural population. Wages and profits alike fell greatly. Vast numbers of workmen were thrown out of employment—estimated at one time to reach 700,000 men. Our social system was more severely strained than at any time since 1848. The Commission on the Depression of Trade collected a vast mass of evidence on the subject, and recommended that a Special Commission should investigate the monetary aspect of the question, believing that that had much to do with it. The result was that the Commission on the Currency was appointed, which has produced a most valuable Report, and which is largely confirmatory of our opinions. Now, I wish to call the attention of the House to the singular fact that the fall of prices and the fall of silver proceeded almost *pari passu;* and the years of the heaviest depression of silver were the years of the heaviest depression in trade. There can be no doubt that these two phenomena were closely connected. Silver fell, as measured by gold, 30 per cent. to the lowest point, and commodities to about 35 per cent.; but all silver-using countries escaped this depression. Prices in them remained unchanged, and commerce went on as before. When the trade of our country was dwindling in value, year by year, that of India was increasing by leaps and bounds. All other gold-using countries suffered similarly; in all there was intense depression, great social discontent, much increase of Socialism, a falling Revenue, and an increase of protection. I wish especially to call attention to this fact, as some persons try to stigmatise our course as secretly favouring Protection. I assert that the great fall in prices in gold-using countries, caused by the demonetisation of silver, enormously increased the sentiment in favour of Protection, and caused a great increase in Import Duties in France, Germany, Russia and Italy, of late years. The policy of the Bi-metallic Party undoubtedly makes for Free Trade. And now I would allude to another point. I would ask attention to a matter I dealt with last year when we debated this subject—and I repeat myself because I see hon. Members present who were not here during the former debate. I may be permitted to touch again on the matter to which I refer, because it lies almost at the root of our contention. I say that the demonetisation of silver was a commercial injustice to the debtor class in all gold-using countries. The creditor class were favoured by the appreciation of gold and the depreciation of silver. Is the House aware of the heavy burden under which the trade of this country is carried on? I do not think many people are aware of it, but I have taken pains for years past to ascertain what the charges upon our trade and commerce really are, and I put it that the trade of this country is carried on under a vast burden of fixed charges, payable in gold, amounting certainly to not less than £150,000,000 a year, and probably as much as £200,000,000 a year. These include national and local debts, mortgages, ground rents, mining royalties, railway debentures and preference shares, long leases, annuities, pensions, &c. The purchasing power of gold, even after the recent revival of trade, is about 40 per cent. greater than it was in 1873, that is to say, 40 per cent. more of the products of human industry have to be sold to raise the money needful to meet these charges. This is a tax levied by the drones on the working bees of society, and surely it cannot be for the well-being of society to add to the incomes of the idle non producing class, at the cost of the toiling masses. I hold that one-half of this extra burden is the result of the demonetisation of silver. There are about equal amounts of gold and silver in circulation; had these metals continued to be tied together by the Bi-metallic Law of 15½ to 1, the fall of prices would have been equally diffused over both gold and silver using countries, and the fall of prices in gold-using countries would have been just half of what it has been. The creditor class, the wealthy bondholders, money lenders, mortgagees, &c., would have lost one-half of their unearned increment, which would have remained in the pockets of the working industrial class, who constitute 90 per cent. of the nation. This one-half cannot be put at less than £30,000,000 a year. In fact, there is much reason to suspect that there was a kind of conspiracy among the financial class in Europe and America to get altogether rid of silver, as full valued money, in order to increase the value of gold, in which their Revenues were paid. There arose, simultaneously, a cry for the demonetisation of silver in Germany, France, the United States, and England, from 1870 to 1878. It was advocated by the newspapers in the interest of the financial class. Their aim was to bring about a universal gold standard; they calculated on the ignorance of the masses about all monetary questions, and very nearly succeeded, for a time, in what I could only call a nefarious plot. In America they succeeded, by a kind of trick, in demonetising silver for a short time; but the American people were too shrewd to be long hood-winked; they insisted on silver being re-monetised, and they have wisely coined and put into circulation, in the shape of silver certificates, about £70,000,000, and so greatly relieved the strain on gold, the ratio being 16 to 1. Within the past few days a Bill has passed the Committee of both Houses of the Legislature enormously increasing the coinage of silver, and requiring the Government to coin, not $2,000,000 monthly, but $4,500,000, with the result of causing a great rise in the price of silver. The American people thoroughly understand that the contracting of the money supply of the country makes only in the interest of the fixed investment classes. Our object is to make our people understand the subject as well as the Americans—and when they do so, we shall find that whatever the House may arrive at as to our proposal to-day it will then respond heartily to the proposition we make. I believe that it is largely owing to the efforts of the Bi-metallic Party that the tendency to demonetise silver has been checked, and a gigantic fraud against civilisation has not been fully consummated. The agitation which we have carried on has made the masses understand that their interest lies in a full circulation of money, not in a contracted one. It has made them understand that the contraction of the currency makes only, as I say, for the interest of the fixed investment class, and is opposed to the well-being of the whole nation. I claim in support of my views the great authority of the Currency Commission. They put in the clearest light the immensely increased strain put on gold at the time when silver was demonetised; they point out that just at that time the new requirements for the United States, Germany, Italy, and other countries to fill up their circulation with gold caused a demand for £200,000,000 sterling. At that time the whole production of gold in the world was only £20,000,000 a year, of which one-half was used up in the arts: that is to say, only £10,000,000 was available annually for purposes of coinage, and to meet this sudden demand for £200,000,000. This was the moment chosen to demonetise silver, just when there was a great scarcity of gold. Need we wonder that gold was appreciated in value, just as silver was depreciated? Its supply obeyed the laws of all commodities; as the supply fell off and the demand increased it rose in value, but the increased demand was largely the product of unjust and unwise legislation, which excluded silver from the joint work it had hitherto discharged along with gold, and artificially raised one metal and lowered the other. The operation of this principle is clearly explained by Professor Thorold Rogers, in these words:—

> "It will be clear that just as a very great fall would take place in the value of existing stocks of gold were this metal absolutely demonetised, so *e converso* a considerable rise would occur in its comparative value if in the economical history of any community, or rather of a large number of communities, gold were increasingly adopted as a measure of value and a means for carrying on commerce."

All the best economists maintain the

Mr. Samuel Smith

advantage to mankind of a full supply of money, and the evil of its artificial contraction. The historian, Hume, writes—

> "We find that in every kingdom into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly everything takes a new face. Labour and industry gain life, the merchant becomes more enterprising, the manufacturer more diligent and skilful, and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention."

McCulloch wrote—

> "Though like a fall of rain after a long course of dry weather an increase of the precious metals may be prejudicial to certain classes, it is beneficial to an incomparably greater number, including all who are actively engaged in industrial pursuits, and is, speaking generally, of great public and national advantage."

Chevalier says—

> "Such a change will benefit those who live by current labour. It will injure those who live upon the fruits of past labour, whether their fathers' or their own; in this it will . . . . work in the same direction with most of the developments which are brought about by the great law of civilisation, to which we give the noble name of 'progress.'"

Jevons strongly maintains the same view, and Allison, in a remarkable passage, points out how the resurrection of mankind from the sleep of the Middle Ages was largely owing to the increased supply of money from South America, which greatly diminished the weight of debts and taxes, and gave hope and buoyancy to mankind. Exactly the same effect was produced by the gold discoveries of California and Australia, which gave Europe 25 years of extraordinary prosperity. I should like to add that no one has written more ably on the subject of the appreciation of our gold standard and the injury that it does to the debtor class, than Mr. Giffen, who has lately shown such unaccountable hostility to our movement. I have only time to glance at two other great evils which have arisen from the demonetisation of silver. The first of these is the disturbance of the finances of India. As all the House knows, the Indian Government collects its revenues in silver, but has to pay about £15,000,000 sterling annually in gold in London for fixed charges. It is obvious that just as silver falls more and more must be parted with to meet these charges. It is clearly set forth in the Report of the Royal Commission. They show that every fall of 1d. in exchange imposes an extra burden of say 10,000,000 rupees on India, increasing as the exchange falls. Now, as the exchange has fallen in India from 1s. 11d. to 1s. 5d. per rupee since 1872, the extra burden to India is nearly 60,000,000 rupees, say of upwards of £4,000,000 at present rate of exchange. There is dispute about some minor points, but all the Indian financial authorities declare that the Revenue has suffered by several millions sterling, and the greatest confusion has been caused to Indian finance. They have had innumerable deficits since 1873, and have had to suspend the Famine Insurance Fund for several years, and add to the cruel and oppressive Salt Tax, which is now about 15 times the prime cost of the article. There is, it seems a surplus on this year's Budget, partly caused by the rise of exchange. It is said that the people of India gain just as their Government loses. I allow that there is some truth in this. Its trade is stimulated by the same cause that injured ours for so long. Its cotton manufacture has, no doubt, been galvanised by the low exchange which has hurt Manchester so much. But, on the other hand, a great impediment is put in the way of borrowing in England for railways and other re-productive works; and, when this and the increased taxation is taken into account, it is very doubtful whether India on the whole is a gainer. It must also be remembered that a great part of the savings of India, for hundreds of years, is invested in silver. India holds at least £200,000,000 sterling in coined silver, and, perhaps, as much in the shape of ornaments; and this vast mass has fallen nearly 30 per cent., as compared with the gold money of Europe. Were silver universally demonetised it would fall very much more; and were India to adopt a gold standard, as some have proposed, it would be almost confiscated. I am sure that, in the long run, a bi-metallic system would conduce to the benefit of India; and all tnat I have said of India holds equally true of China and other silver-using countries. I can only glance at the last great evil which has sprung from the disuse of the bi-metallic system, namely, the injury inflicted on the cotton trade of Lancashire. This industry is the greatest but one in the country. It gives a maintenance, directly and indirectly, to two millions of people, and has suffered more than any industry in England during the past 15 years, except, perhaps, the wheat growing districts. It is not experiencing the revival of trade which has visited most other industries; its progress has almost ceased, while that of our great competitors is proceeding by leaps and bounds. Will the House allow me to give some figures from Mr. Thomas Ellison's Annual Circular, which is the best authority on all questions of cotton statistics? In the 18 years from 1871 to 1889 the consumption of cotton increased in Great Britain, 25 per cent.; Continent of Europe, 107 per cent.; United States, 141 per cent.; India, 901 per cent.; in other words, it increased in India from 87,000 bales to 871,000 bales. One result of that increase has been almost to transfer a vast trade in yarn with China and Japan from Lancashire to Bombay. I can put this before the House in a single sentence. In 1874 we exported to China and Japan nine times as much yarn as was sent from India; now India sends three times as much as we do, and will apparently extinguish our trade in the course of time. Now, I assert that one chief cause of this gigantic increase of trade, is the virtual bounty given to India by the constant fall of silver and exchange. Whatever other advantages India possesses, Lancashire can easily cope with; but this bounty handicaps her hopelessly in the race. I do not intend to go into this complicated subject, as I shall be followed by a gentleman who thoroughly comprehends it in all its bearings. I will simply say that the manufacturing population thoroughly understand it; they know it is a matter of life and death to them; and they will make their influence felt in this House, either now or at the next General Election, in a way that will surprise some politicians. I will now ask the House, to turn with me to the last division of the subject, namely, the practicability and desirability of re-establishing the bi-metallic system internationally. Let me remind the House that two Conferences have been held in Paris for this purpose; the first in 1878, and the second in 1881. These Conferences were called at the joint invitation of France and the United States, and the object was to try if an international agreement could be come to for the restoration of the bi-metallic system. Germany was not represented at the First Conference, but was represented at the second one, which, practically, embraced all the principal nations of the world. It is not too much to assert that the refusal of England to alter her system was the main reason of the failure of these Conferences. There is every reason to believe that if England had agreed, then the United States, France, and Germany would have concurred, and probably nearly all the States of Europe. The great evils arising from the demonetisation of silver were admitted by all, and by none more than the English Delegates, of whom the present Chancellor of the Exchequer was one, in 1878. He said—

> "A campaign against silver would be extremely dangerous, even for countries with a gold standard. Though England had a gold standard she had great interest in the maintenance of silver as currency. One or two States might demonetise silver without serious results; but if all demonetised there would be no buyers, and silver would fall in alarming proportions. Thus all, or nearly all, States were interested in silver. If all States should resolve on the adoption of a gold standard the question arose, Would there be sufficient gold for the purpose without a tremendous crisis?"

The subject is far better understood now than it was then; it would be easier now to get a general agreement. Germany has very much altered her views, and it is believed to be now ready to join if England will be a party to International action. All turns upon the policy of this country; we can prolong the era of confusion, or we can close it. I ask, which is the nobler *rôle* to play? Now, let me deal as briefly as possible with the main objections against our scheme. In the first place, the weightiest objection is the supposed impossibility of fixing by law a permanent ratio between two articles which constantly vary in the rate and cost of production. No one has laboured as much as Mr. Giffen, and, I allow, with great ability. Mr. Giffen's great object has been to show that the French ratio did not secure fixity. I think I have proved that it did so practically in spite of the extraordinary strain to which it was subjected, first, by the small gold supply early in the century; secondly, by the inundation of gold after 1850; and thirdly, by the fact that France stood alone between England, a gold-using country, and Germany, a silver-using country, and thus was first drained of one metal and then of the other. If England, Germany, and the United States had been parties to the bi-metallic system of France, these slight variations would not have occurred. The judgment of the Currency Commission was practically unanimous on this point. Even the six members who were not in favour of this country becoming bi-metallic came to the following conclusion:—

> (Sec. 107.) "We think that in any conditions fairly to be contemplated in the future, so far as we can forecast them from the experience of the past, a staple ratio might be maintained if the nations we have alluded to (the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States, and the Latin Union) were to accept and strictly adhere to bi-metallism at the suggested ratio. We think that if in all these countries gold and silver could be freely coined and thus become exchangeable against commodities at the fixed ratio, the market value of silver as measured by gold would conform to that ratio, and not vary to any material extent."

I am aware that two Members (Sir John Lubbock and Mr. Birch) put in a mild caveat against this view; but even if we exclude them, 10 out of 12 Members fully adopted this conclusion, supported by the great name of their Chairman, Lord Herschell. One right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), while admitting the efficiency of the French ratio, feels difficulty in believing in International bi-metallism, on the ground of the great fall of silver in the sixteenth century, namely, from 11 to 1, to 15 to 1 of gold. Let me reply that the principle of International bi-metallism could not then be tested, as the nations had not then their Mints open to the unlimited coinage of both metals at a common ratio, and this is the indispensable condition for success. Each nation then acted solely for itself. Coinage was made from time to time as each Government thought best and at what ratio it thought fit, and the coins were excessively clipt and worn, and often debased by unscrupulous Governments. For instance, at the time of the great English re-coinage of 1695 so clipped and worn were the coins that, on the average, they fell short 50 per cent. of their proper weight, and the Exchequer lost £2,400,000 on the operation. It is absurd to compare such a chaotic system with our perfect coinage regulations of nowadays. If a true and uniform bi-metallic system had existed in the 16th century, it would have tided over the influx of silver from South America, just as the French system tided over the influx of gold from California and Australia. Then it is objected by some that if an International agreement were made, gold, being the over-valued metal, would gradually leave the bi-metallic countries, and silver would alone remain. Have these persons ever succeeded in showing where the gold would go to? The area we propose would contain a currency of £500,000,000 of gold coin, and £200,000,000 of full-valued silver coin, not counting token coins, which, of course, do not come within the purview of the question. I am supposing that the Union embraces France, Germany, the United States, and Great Britain, even without our Colonies and India. Is it possible that this large sum of £500,000,000 could go anywhere else, or be all used up in the Arts? The thing is absurd. These are the great creditor nations of the world; at least, the European ones are; money constantly flows to them from all other places; they can always keep what they need for their currency requirements. Besides, the other nations of the world which are mostly silver-using could have no motive in getting one metal rather than another, as both would be of exactly the value fixed by International agreement. The annual product of the mines at present is thought to be about £24,000,000 a year of gold, and about the same of silver. It is supposed that nearly half the gold is used in the Arts, or hoarded in India; and half the silver is used in the Arts and in the silver-using nations of Asia. There only remain for all Europe and America, for purposes of coinage, about £12,000,000 of gold and about the same amount of silver, which is little enough to supply the wear and tear of these Continents and to meet the growing demands of so vast a population and so great a trade. It only represents an addition to the existing Stocks of 1 or 2 per cent. annually, and is quite insufficient to disturb the equilibrium between the metals. The fact is, that under a bi-metallic system the currencies of the principal nations would hardly be affected at all. Each country would keep the metal it preferred, and England would remain mainly gold-using, with this difference—that silver could be sent to the Bank when required, as is now the case with the Bank of France, and form a basis for note issues as well as gold. We are told that silver is inconvenient for large payments. This has been humorously called the "wheelbarrow" argument. The reply is that large payments would be made then as now by means of bank notes and cheques, just as is the case in France, the only difference being that the bank reserve will consist of two metals in place of one. If needful, it could be stipulated that silver coin should not be legal tender between man and man beyond £2, though of course no limit could be put upon its payment by banks. Another objection is that the legislation we propose will benefit the silver miners, especially in the United States; and a foolish prejudice is caused by this paltry argument. In fact, no benefit would accrue unless the present market ratio of 21 to 1 were raised. It is quite doubtful what an International Conference would do; it might agree to accept the present ratio or take 20 to 1, or 18 to 1, as the future ratio. Some intermediate ratio would probably be adopted. Suppose it is 20 to 1, how would that affect the American miners? America produces £9,000,000 of silver and £5,000,000 of gold. The surplus of silver is £4,000,000 annually. If that were raised 5 per cent. it represents a gain of £200,000 annually; if 10 per cent. it comes to £400,000 a year. The figures are so trifling that it is hardly worth talking of them when we contrast them with the National Debts and fixed charges which would be affected by the standard in which payment is made. The fact is, the whole silver product of America is worth no more than the annual yield of eggs! Great use is made by our opponents of the argument that England, being a creditor country, it is her interest to be paid in gold rather than in silver. That is the pith of the Amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair). But the great bulk of the annual remittances to England represent not gold interest, but industrial investments and freights; both of these would come to us quite the same, whatever the standard money might be. English investments abroad are mainly in mines, plantations, tea, coffee, and sugar estates, and those innumerable forms of enterprise which open up the new or backward countries of the world. The income from them in no way depends upon the money employed as the standard. The amount coming home for freights is supposed to be £50,000,000 annually. The total annual surplus of imports over exports, which is roughly supposed to measure the indebtedness to England, exceeds £100,000,000 a year. I doubt whether the remittances for gold interest, after deducting silver interest, exceed £25,000,000 annually, and that goes to a very small class of the richest people in this country. Let me quote from the Currency Commission (page 35)—

> "The only gain is in connection with loans made in gold at fixed rates of interest, and the total gains from this class of investments should be reduced by the loss on similar investments made in silver or other currency which has depreciatad in comparison with gold. A large portion of this gain is made at the expense of British colonies and dependencies such as India, and does not accrue to the country at large, but to a very limited class."

This puts the whole case in a nutshell. The Member for Leeds seems to dread a torrent of silver coming into this country to re-pay debts contracted in gold. Let me assure him that the fear is purely imaginary. Payments to this country are all made in commodities, and will continue to be so made, whether the currency is gold, silver, or bi-metallic, just as they are made to France, which is also a creditor country, and annually receives a surplus of imports over exports. An Amendment is to be moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London University (Sir J. Lubbock) implying that the trade of this country has prospered because we have had a gold standard. It has already been pointed out that the great prosperity of our trade came to an end about 1873-74, and did not experience a real and solid revival until last year, or the year before. Now, we virtually enjoyed the benefits of the bi-metallic system until 1873-74. We could always get a fixed exchange between silver and gold at Paris, and this gave us identical money in all the world of commerce and wonderfully facilitated our trade with Asia. Between 1874 and 1887 there was a period of extraordinary depression. It is true that we are now experiencing a revival which would have come long before but for the suicidal contraction of the world's money through the demonetisation of silver. Another objection brought against our scheme is that London is the financial centre of the world, partly owing to its gold standard and the certainty that a bill on London can always be turned into gold. London is the financial centre because it has the largest reservoir of capital, and money can be borrowed here more freely than anywhere else. Were London, Paris, New York, and Berlin to be under the same monetary system, of course London would suffer no disadvantage, neither would there be any demand for gold rather than silver, as each metal would be equally useful in settling International balances. Some bankers dread a financial crisis of this great monetary change be made. Mr. Giffen has drawn an appalling picture of all bank depositors suddenly clamouring for payment in gold. This fear is quite imaginary. No such crisis occurred when the United States began coining silver as full legal tender, nor when the Currency Laws of many other countries have been altered. The change we propose would only come slowly after long deliberation by a Conference of the leading nations, and one may venture to predict that the price of silver in the open market would reach the ratio agreed on long before the time fixed for making it a legal tender. It would no doubt be agreed that the Mints of all the contracting Powers should be opened simultaneously at a certain date to the unlimited coinage of both gold and silver at a fixed ratio, each metal to be full legal tender for all debts; and the knowledge of this would equalise the value of the metals long beforehand, and take away all motive for creditors to call in their debts. If they were foolish enough to withdraw their deposits they would soon have to replace them, as they could not make any use of them otherwise. It is said the compact will not be kept, and it will give way under stress of war, or national bankruptcy. There possibly might be a temporary suspension of specie payments by some nations of the group, just as France suspended for a short time during the war of 1870-71, but the treaty would stipulate that when specie payments were resumed it should be on the old basis. It should be remembered that the French ratio lasted 70 years in spite of numerous suspensions of specie payments. The United States suspended specie payments during their Civil War, and all their specie was exported to Europe, without disturbing the French ratio. Italy and Austria suspended without any injurious result. The same result would be witnessed again, with this difference: that the plan we propose would be far wider and more secure in its foundations. The whole tendency of the time is towards International action, and there is no kind of action more necessary and beneficial than monetary legislation. The most plausible objection brought against us, and the one which most easily excites vulgar prejudice, is, that we favour Protection. I must ask permission to say a word or two about this. I utterly disclaim, for myself, the slightest desire to bring about Protection; all I wish is a just monetary standard, which will be best attained by using the two metals jointly, in place of either of them singly. I defy anyone to point out what article is "protected," except, perhaps, wheat, in the slightest possible way; but wheat would not be affected unless we alter the present ratio of 21 to 1. Suppose the ratio is altered to 20 to 1, or 18 to 1, a slight check would be given to the import of wheat from India; but Indian wheat forms but a small part of our whole import. The great bulk of our wheat comes from America and Russia, and the check to Indian wheat would probably not add more than 1s. or 2s. to the general price of wheat; and that would not arise from imposing a Protective Duty but from taking off some of the bounty which is practically given to Indian exports by the low rate of exchange. If the question of Protection is to be introduced into this discussion, then it will be found to tell far more forcibly against our opponents. What do they seek but the protection of gold against silver? They wish, as far as lies in their power, to "boycott" silver, and throw the world upon gold alone, even though such a course should double the value of gold, and double the weight of the £4,000,000,000 of National Debts payable in gold, and the far larger volume of private debts in the gold-using countries. In trying to "boycott" silver, they are giving Protection to the wealthy capitalist class, just as clearly as the old Corn Laws did to the landowners of this country. The only difference is that the amounts involved are much larger, and the protected class much richer, and the confiscation of the fruits of the toilers far more sweeping than under the old system of Corn Laws. When the masses of this country awake, as those of America have awaked, to the magnitude of this question, they will brush away this idle talk that we are trying to restore Protection. They will discover that our protected classes are the wealthy money lenders and bondholders who, through the demonetisation of silver, have robbed the debtor class as much as if 20 per cent. had been added to the weight of the sovereign. Lastly, we are charged with a desire to raise prices artificially. I reply, we really want to prevent forcing them down artificially by contracting the money supply of the world. We want to use the two metals which Nature gives automatically, and let prices fluctuate naturally according as Nature gives us more or less money. We wish to minimise the operation of human law, and accept as far as possible the law of Nature. That is true Free Trade. To use both metals is true Free Trade, while laws preventing the use of one of them is Protection. We wish to use both metals, and in doing so we believe trade will be most stable and least affected by currency legislation. Besides, our plan will make it much easier for countries like Austria, Russia, and some of the States of South America to resume specie payments. At present they must resume, if they do it at all, in gold alone; but if bi-metallism were adopted, they could resume in both gold and silver; they could draw their supplies of specie from the whole money of the world instead of from only one-half of it. The plan we propose makes in favour of hard money, that is honest money all the world over. Our scheme is equally opposed to inflating the currency or contracting it. We believe in the convertibility of the bank note and in a uniform and honest standard of value all the world over; and we believe that the two metals tied together form a more staple standard than either separately. Gold discoveries and silver discoveries seem to be made alternately, and each metal fluctuates more violently by itself than the two when joined together. I have trespassed on the time of the House for too long; my only apology is the magnitude and difficulty of the subject. I have sought to put the main features of the case as clearly as I could before the House, and I hope it will be seen that the scheme we advocate is theoretically, as well as practically, the most perfect. It cannot be denied that the recent revival of trade tells against our cause. The Budget Statement shows clearly a state of general prosperity; but this prosperity will not last for ever. Fresh monetary dislocations may again upset the trade of the world. Had America repealed the Bland Act, and ceased coining silver, we should have had another cataclysm; fortunately, she is going in the other direction, and tending more and more towards the re-monetisation of silver. France still holds a very large stock of silver; we have no security how she will act with it until an International agreement is arrived at. Germany still holds a considerable quantity of its old silver, circulating like that of France, at its old ratio of 15½ to 1. The whole situation is provisional and uncertain, and no one can guess what developments may occur within the next few years. We may have entire re-monetisation of silver in America, coming along with a great yield of gold in South Africa, which may bring back the old ratio of the metals; or we may have fresh demonetisation of silver which may force it down much lower than has yet been seen. The present is a favourable time for International negotiations. The Temple of Janus is closed. Peace and goodwill reign among the nations of the world. Is not this a fitting time to call a Conference to settle this vexed and complicated question? We have had an International Labour Conference with good results. Can we not have an International Monetary Conference with even better results? I appeal to the House to give a vote in favour of Progress, Peace, and Free Trade, and to lead the way in a policy that makes for justice all the world over.

Amendment proposed,

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House the evils which have resulted from the divergence in the relative value of silver and gold following the monetary changes which took place in Europe in 1873, can best be dealt with by a Conference of the chief Commercial Nations of the World called to consider whether a bi-metallic system can be re-established by International agreement in the interest of all the Nations concerned,"—(*Mr. Samuel Smith,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(5.10.) SIR W. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I desire to second the Motion. There are two propositions in the Resolution which will be generally accepted—first, that about 1873 there took place a great monetary change in Europe; and, secondly, that from that date an unprecedented divergence in the relative value of gold and silver occurred. There is a third proposition intimately connected with the other two, namely, that certain evils have resulted from that divergence between silver and gold. The monetary change to which I refer was the closing of the Mints of France and the Latin Union to the free coinage of silver at a fixed ratio. The divergence in the relative value of silver and gold which followed was continuous and extensive. In 1872 silver was at 60d.; in 1889 it had fallen to 42d. These are facts which cannot be denied. There is, however, a further question, which I admit may be a subject of controversy, although I should have thought that after the Report of the Royal Commission, supported as it is by the unanimous opinion of all the political economists of the day, it would have been finally set at rest. That question is whether any connection existed between the monetary change of which I have spoken and the great divergence that took place. Our argument is this: Before 1873, when Mints were open in Europe for the free coinage of silver at a fixed ratio, that circumstance tied gold to silver, and, as a matter of fact, the relative value between them remained constant. But in 1873, when those Mints were closed, new conditions arose. Silver then became a commodity, and was left entirely to the action of the laws of supply and demand. The finding of the Royal Commission on this point is absolute and unanimous. The Commissioners arrived at these two conclusions—first, that during the period before 1873, there must have been some steadying influence, apart from the laws of supply and demand, that kept the relative value of gold and silver approximately

stable; and, secondly, that after 1873 that steadying influence must have been removed. After looking over the whole field that was brought before them, they could discover no other steadying influence which could produce this effect except the Bi-metallic Law of France. It was due to bi-metallism that the ratio between gold and silver was maintained between 1803 and 1873. In their investigations of the variations in the value of silver in the 40 years preceding 1873, between the highest and the lowest point, they found the difference was only 3d. When they came to the 14 years after 1873, they found the difference between the highest and the lowest point was 15d. If they had continued their investigations to 1889, they would have found it reached 17d. Further, the Commission found that the maximum fluctuation in 1872 was not more than five-eights of a penny, whereas in 1886 it was not less than 3d. Seeking for the causes of these facts, the Commission found that while in the 10 years, from 1831 to 1840, the production of silver was double that of gold, in the years from 1851 to 1855 it was only one-fourth of gold, and yet, notwithstanding these fluctuations of supply, the market price of silver remained about the same during the whole period. Next, taking the period after 1873, they found the supply of gold and silver had been about equal, and yet the fluctuations in the market price of silver varied from 15½ to 1 to 18 to 1. With results such as these before them the Commissioners unanimously came to the conclusions I have mentioned. Those conclusions have been contested in the public Press, and by no less an authority than Mr. Giffen, to whom reference has already been made. Mr. Giffen has denied that bi-metallism had any effect whatever in maintaining the ratio before 1873, and that the rupture of the system did not cause the fall in the price of silver. Now, Mr. Giffen's position on this subject is rather peculiar. He gave very valuable evidence before the Commission, and presented statistics which are the foundation of our conclusions, and I do not desire in any degree to disparage that eminent and useful public servant. But it is to be regretted that he declined to give the Commission any assistance in the investigation of the practical part of this question, and absolutely refused to lay his views before the Commission. The excuse he gives, apparently, is that he was asked to come before the Commission as the champion of mono-metallism. All I can say is that the Commissioners, as a body, certainly never asked Mr. Giffen to appear in that capacity, though, of course, I cannot speak for the views of individual Members of the Commission. Mr. Giffen may, however, have had good reasons for not assisting us in our investigations. But, at any rate, I think it was a very questionable proceeding on his part when, immediately the Report was published, he violently attacked that Report, and certain of the Commissioners personally. And when Mr. Giffen went so far as to characterise the Report of the Commission as a scandal of the first magnitude, I can only say that his views on this subject would have had more weight if he had addressed himself to a consideration of the Report in a more judicial spirit. The main argument of Mr. Giffen is, that during the period of bi-metallism, there were variations in the ratio, and this he urges as if it were in itself destructive of our theory of bi-metallism. Mr. Giffen went back as far as the year 1581, and certainly gave figures showing variations between that year and 1803 of 23 to 27 per cent. But we decline to accept that period as one of effective bi-metallism. From 1803 to 1873, which bi-metallists are willing to accept as a scientific period of bi-metallism, though it was only in operation over a limited area, the variations only ranged from ½ to 3 per cent. But it is an entire mistake to suppose that variations are inconsistent with bi-metallism. It does not follow that the market ratio is always the same as the legal ratio. The legal ratio is not an absolute, but a controlling force, keeping the variations in the market ratio within certain definite limits. It acts like the governor of a steam engine, and the effect of bi-metallism is clearly manifested during the years between 1803 and 1873 by the fact that the variations of ratio were very slight compared to what they had been formerly and to what they have been since. Mr. Giffen's opinion carries weight, I know; I would therefore like to strengthen our case by quotations from undoubted authorities on such subjects—Professor Walker, Professor Jevons, and Mr. Bagehot.

[Here follow quotations.] Thus I think I have shown that the Bi-metallic Law is a real power which can bind the legal ratio and the market ratio together within certain variations; and that is the basis of our application to the House of Commons to-night to entertain and consider the question. I will now proceed to say a few words on what, perhaps, the House will consider of more importance, and that is the evils which we believe have arisen from this divergence in the relative value of gold and silver which has undoubtedly taken place since 1873. I notice that the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of London says there is no justification for any fundamental change in the standard of value. Well, I am rather at a loss to understand fully what he means by "no justification." Does he mean that no effect whatever has been produced by this divergence between silver and gold since 1873? Does he mean to say there has been no injury, no loss, no effect whatever upon trade? I cannot think he for a moment would make such an assertion, because it is utterly opposed to the Report which he himself signed. It is there distinctly acknowledged by the Commissioners, in that portion of the Report to which the name of the right hon. Gentleman is attached, that there had been a serious amount of loss and embarrassment and injury to trade. If he means that there has not been sufficient justification for this change, then I should like him, when he addresses the House, to tell us what amount of injury, damage, and loss he thinks is necessary in order to justify the change which we propose. It can be proved both from personal knowledge, and also from statistics, that, during the last 18 years, the country has been going through a period of depression which has been more intense and more peculiar than any that has preceded it for many years before, and it has not been accounted for in any way except by monetary causes. A Commission was appointed to examine carefully into the cause of the depression of trade in 1882. It took an immense amount of evidence, yet it could not put its finger upon any real reason why there should have been such a depression. But the moment that the Currency Commission met, as will be found from their Report, paragraph after paragraph show they acknowledged that monetary causes had produced injury and loss and depression. I know there is a prevalent opinion that trade is in a satisfactory state at the present moment, but I think a great deal more has been made of the late improvement than is justified by the facts. I still hope that the improvement may not pass away, but I noticed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, last night, seemed to be more sanguine than I am as to the improvement. He used the expression, "trade was reviving." From my knowledge, I should rather say that trade had revived, and that it is again declining. Whether that decline will go on or not I do not wish to anticipate, but we have had this very peculiar experience during the last 18 years, which we never had before in commercial centres, that while we have had slight periods of improvement, they have only continued for a month or two, and then they have passed away. We have had what the Chancellor of the Exchequer, last night, very happily called "false dawns." During the last 18 years, when there has been an improvement in trade it has lasted only for a few months at a time, or 12 months at the outside. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has noticed the Returns of the exports for last month. They are very startling, because they show a falling off of £100,000,000. I do not wish to make too much of this. I do not think it represents a real decline of trade. To a large extent it may be accounted for by other causes, but, at the same time, from my own knowledge of the state of trade both in the iron industry and in the cotton industry, I have no hesitation in saying, that if the present state of things continue the Board of Trade Returns during the next month and the month after will be materially affected. There is no doubt that not only have prices fallen, but the visible demand from abroad, and from the home markets, in both the cotton and the iron industry is perceptibly less than it was. Take a longer period. Last year was a good year, the best year we have had for some time. The imports and exports then reached £740,000,000. But go back to 1883;

we then had exports and imports as large. That is to say, we have made no progress whatever since 1883, and in the intervening period of years the total amount of exports and imports was materially less. I should just like to refer the House to some statements that have appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, some sensational paragraphs which I think I ought to notice. A statement has been made that the cotton industry of Oldham is making large profits. Some of these profits are given. One remarkable case is mentioned — one amongst others — of a firm which has, so it is said, made 39 per cent. profit. To say the least, that is a most misleading statement, because, as far as it is accurate, it only means that profits have been made at the rate of 39 per cent. for the last quarter. It is a mistake to assume that this was the profit of the past twelve months. They have made nothing of the sort.

An hon. MEMBER: The statement says so—per annum.

*SIR W. HOULDSWORTH: Then it is untrue. But the only way in which 39 per cent., even for the quarter, could be brought out is by calculating the amount of profit on the share capital only. Now, it is well known that in many cases, especially in Oldham, the borrowed capital is two or three, or even four times more than the share capital. The consequence is that if the profits that have actually been made were divided over the whole of the capital employed in the business, the percentage would be reduced very materially. And a curious fact is this, that although that statement is put forward to induce people to believe that the cotton industry is doing well, yet out of the 19 mills which were referred to in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in 12 of those mills the shares are actually at a discount, and out of 92 mills in the Oldham Official List, in 54 the shares are similarly at a discount. It is perfectly clear, therefore, these figures do not give a true representation of the state of affairs. But these figures would have to be considered from another point of view if accepted as real profits made in this industry. I have a case here of a spinning business, which shows a profit for the last quarter of £3,385, but the way in which that profit has been made was, at any rate, as far as £2,500 was concerned, by speculating in cotton—not by legitimate working. Now, I should like to bring before the House some figures, I think, of rather an astonishing character. I do not adduce them for one moment for the purpose of showing what the effect of the divergence between silver and gold has been; but I think they are sufficiently startling to induce the House to consider the state in which our industries are, as compared with those of foreign countries. The statement I have is a comparison between 1870 and 1884, and I find that, taking the imports and exports of 11 of the large Continental nations, they have increased by no less than between 50 and 60 per cent. in those years, whereas those of this country, in the same period, have only increased by 11 per cent. Now what the divergence in the relative value of silver and gold really did, especially when there was a heavy fall in the value of silver, was to dislocate the whole machinery of trade. From the merchants down to the workpeople they are all, more or less, affected the moment you have anything like a serious divergence in the relative value of the two currencies, gold and silver. It is very simple to see how it affects our own country. Silver, the House will remember, has fallen 30 per cent. Whenever a fall takes place in the gold price of silver one of two things must occur. Either the gold price of commodities must fall, or the silver price must rise, or an adjustment must be brought about by both these operations combined. You must have an adjustment of some sort or another. The gold price of silver fell 30 per cent., but did silver prices rise? We find they did not. The consequence is, the whole weight fell upon gold, and an adjustment had to be brought about, and, as a matter of fact, was brought about, by the fall in gold prices. Silver prices remained as they were. Now, what is the effect of a fall in gold prices of anything like 30 per cent? Three classes are specially affected The merchants, the agricultural industry, and the manufacturing industry. The merchant, to a great extent, is not in the same position as the capitalist or the wage-earner, who is engaged in industrial operations. The merchant is more independent. What he really suffers from is not so much the fall in silver as the fluctuations in the rate of exchange. His business is quite different from what it was a few years ago. It was not then so dependent on the slight variations which take place in prices from day to day. But now transactions are carried out by telegraph from Calcutta to Manchester direct, and generally the transaction from the buying of the cotton to the selling of the article produced is completed in one day. The consequence is that the profit which the merchant receives is very small indeed, being nothing more than a small commission for his trouble in carrying out the transaction; and unless, day by day, there is constant business he suffers considerable loss; and he finds exchange varies frequently, that business, instead of being steady from day to day or from week to week, according to the variations of demand, is subjected to a series of fits and starts. Whenever a new fall takes place business is stopped until the exigency of the manufacturer forces him to take the lower gold price, and so, from time to time, there are checks upon trade which are fatal to the successful carrying on of the merchant's business. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer has fully recognised this, because in the Conference alluded to, and which he attended, I noticed he put in the forefront, in regard to the difficulties which had arisen at that time through the fall silver, the case of the merchant. Since then the evil has been intensified. I put the case of the agriculturist and the manufacturer together, for, in most respects, they may be considered in conjunction for the present purpose. The effect of the fall in the gold price of silver has been to drive down gold prices in this country, and those engaged in industry, whether agricultural or manufacturing, have had to accept a lower gold price. It has not been the case of one fall of 30 per cent., but it has been a gradual going down of prices during the last eight, 10, or 15 years, and lower, step by step, has fallen the gold price which the manufacturer receives for his goods. The House should understand that this gold price comes down instantly if a fall has taken place in the gold price of silver. Those who deal in wholesale markets are aware that they are very sensitive to any action or any rumour which has a tendency to affect prices, and the consequence is that the moment there is anything in the atmosphere which ought to lower gold price immediately the gold price goes down in the wholesale market. But what position is the manufacturer in? If the manufacturer has to reduce the gold price which he receives in exchange for his goods by 5 or 10 per cent. he suffers immediately loss unless he can at once reduce the cost of his production by a similar amount. The items which make up the cost of production are—first, his rent, including interest to bankers and to mortgagees; secondly, articles consumed in the business; and, thirdly, wages. With regard to rent and interest on mortgages the manufacturer cannot get the rate reduced immediately, as he is often under a contract for years. With regard to articles of consumption, he is often under contract for 12 months, or has to deal with a middleman, who does not freely give him the benefit of the lower gold prices. As to wages, they are not adjusted day by day, and cannot be adjusted at all except with a considerable amount of friction. I have here some figures as to the effect of this fall in gold prices upon a particular business. In 1874 I find that the selling value fell from 100 to 88, and the cost of production, exclusive of raw material, only fell from 100 to 99; in 1875 the selling value fell to 81, and the cost of production to 94. Then, in 1876, the selling value fell to 65, whilst the cost of production fell only to 86. During that period, therefore, the manufacturer was reduced to cost price, or possibly something below it, and so was gradually adding to his indebtedness to his bankers and others, and getting a millstone around his neck which he could not throw off. This explains the depression which has been prevalent in the textile and mining and iron industries during the last 18 years, while there has been this steady fall in the gold price, attributable to the fact that there has been a fall in the gold price of silver. It will be said, I have no doubt, by some Members that this is, after all, only a question of a little loss to the capitalist which he can very well bear. But it is a much larger question, because, although the brunt falls upon him first, the effect goes downwards to the wage-earner, who, year after year, has been called upon to suffer some loss of wages. Then no doubt it will be said—I think it was said before the Royal Commission—"Yes, but although the wage-earner has less wages, still he cannot be any the worse off, because the price of commodities will also be lower." I think it will be found, however, that the wage-earner does not get the benefit in the fall in the price of commodities; certainly not for a very long time, and that is the reason why the working classes join their employers so heartily in this movement, believing it is at the root of the depression and of the loss which they have sustained during the last 18 years. I should like to strengthen my observations by a quotation from the Report of the Royal Commission signed by those Members of the Commission who do not recommend bi-metallism. They say—

> "So far as the fall in prices can be connected with the currency, it must tend to diminish the margin of profit, or even to cause it to disappear altogether. This necessarily results in an effort on the part of the manufacturer to economise the cost of production by reducing the wages of the operatives. Even if the manufacturers could succeed in reducing wages sufficiently to maintain their former position, this could only be done after considerable struggles, and an amount of friction very undesirable."

Again—

> "It seems by no means clear that there has been a fall in the price of all that the wage-earner needs, and upon which his wages are expended, equivalent to the reduction of wages which has, in fact, taken place."

I think that there can be no doubt that, although the brunt of the loss may fall upon the manufacturer and the farmer, the wage-earner is ultimately the greatest sufferer. That is the reason why the wage-earning classes have joined the employers in this movement. They believe that they have discovered in our present system of currency, the cause of the depression from which they have suffered. This is especially the view taken by the people of Lancashire. Although trade has improved, upon the whole, the improvement in Lancashire has been very slight and very shortlived. Another point I ought to mention is the stimulus that has been given to cotton spinning in India. This question was examined by a Committee of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and their Report shows that a great part of the cotton spinning industry of Lancashire has been transferred to India, where, as an effect of the fall in exchange, spinning mills have been stimulated to an unnatural extent, and while the exports of yarn from India, to China and Japan, have increased between 1876 and 1887 from 70,000,000 lbs. to 113,000,000 lbs., the exports from Lancashire to these counties have remained stationary, and, during some periods, have actually decreased. I find, in point of fact, that in 1887 the exports to China and Japan were considerably less than in 1881, and while the trade of these English mills has been taken away from Lancashire, Lancashire has found nothing to put in its place. For the total exports of cotton yarn from England has decreased in 1887 as compared with 1881 by 4,000,000 lbs. I ought perhaps to notice, however, that, within the last few months, a reaction has taken place in India, as, according to the *Bombay Gazette*, the cotton industry is now in a somewhat critical state in that country, owing to the fact that too many people have been tempted to engage in it. This is the natural consequence of an artificial stimulus. What we want, in order to correct the evils I have attempted to describe, is not inflation or protection, but stability. But how we are to get stability in our standard of value, as long as we have no connecting link between gold and silver, it is impossible for me to conceive. One half of the British Empire uses silver, while the other half carries on its dealings in gold. And, consequently, it will not be too much to say that it will be absolutely necessary, in the course of a few years, to establish some connecting tie between the two currencies employed in the British Empire, to say nothing about other silver-using countries. In one sense, I may say, we bi-metallists are mono-metallists, because we believe that if there could be one metal which would serve as a currency for the whole world, that would be the best system we could adopt. As it is, however, one-half of the world uses, and will use, silver, and the other half uses gold. The question to be solved is, whether we can so connect the two currencies as to tie silver and gold together, so that, although you may have different currencies and different coins, you will have but one standard of value. I have to thank the House very much for the patience with which it has listened to what, I am afraid, has been an exceedingly dry statement, full of matters of detail, but the question is certainly a very serious one. It is said that the price of silver is being raised in America, but what we have really to look at is, whether the price of silver will be maintained in a stable condition? As far as I am personally concerned, I do not care very much what ratio may be accepted as long as a stable ratio is established. If a Conference is called to establish a ratio, I have no doubt it will be able to do so; but that ratio will probably not be widely different from that which exists between the two metals at the time the ratio is fixed. The main point is, that whatever is done should be done with as little change as possible, and, having said this, I trust that the House will very seriously consider this important question as one which vitally affects the interests of trade.

*(6.45.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): Sir, I join with my hon. Friend behind me and the hon. Member who has spoken from the other side of the House in attributing the highest importance to this question. I think the House is indebted to them for the moderation with which they have stated their case, and the evident desire which they manifested to reach a sound and satisfactory conclusion. But their speeches have only shown the great difficulties which surround the question. My hon. Friend has stated that the fall in prices is attributable wholly to the fall in the price of silver. It is, no doubt, attributable to that, concurrently with other causes. But I have not been able to find any evidence, either in the arguments addressed to this House or in the Report of the Commission, or elsewhere, which is absolutely conclusive to show that the fall of silver is, in point of fact, intimately connected with the fall in the value of commodities in different parts of the world. We must ask those who desire this enormous change in the currency of this country, upon which our great commercial transactions rest, in what way they connect the one result with the other? I have been at some pains to examine our Trade Reports during the last few years. There has been a fall which is most distressing to many of those interests which have been engaged in the production of particular commodities. But the fall has not been uniform or constant. There have been variations in prices; there are now variations of a very remarkable character. I will refer to some prices of our imports and exports between the years 1885 and 1889. Many articles have fallen considerably; others, like coffee and fish, have risen. Animals —oxen and sheep—have fallen 16 and 19 per cent. But these very articles, which in 1889 had fallen, will be shown in 1890 to have risen. I believe wheat is now dearer than it has been for some years. But coffee, fish, hemp, jute, have risen from 13 to 31 per cent. Copper ore is dearer than it was in 1885. Iron ore has risen 12 per cent, and manufactured articles are considerably dearer than they were. These variations in prices are shown to exist notwithstanding the continued fall in silver. Some articles have thus risen, while others have fallen in value. But I think my hon. Friends will be prepared to admit that if a universal law had applied to the value of a great number of articles which are abstracted from the ground or grown on the ground, or manufactured, uniformly with the fall or rise of silver, we should have had a different return from that which is shown in the public documents to which I have referred. My hon. Friend has said that what he desires is stability. We all recognise the force of that. But he proposes to link silver with gold, in order that this stability shall be maintained. That is to say, that the metal which has fluctuated in price shall be joined with gold, which has not fluctuated. ["No, no."] I have not heard any proof that there has been a fluctuation in the value of gold. I think I have not unfairly stated the view which my hon. Friend takes. He has argued with great ability that the owner of silver ought to be able to take a bar of silver to the Mint and insist that it shall be turned into coin at a fixed rate. It has been profitable for the owners of silver mines to produce an enormously increased amount of silver during the last 20 years. The production has quadrupled and reached 24 millions a year. It has been possible for them to sell this silver at 42d. an ounce. If it is profitable to sell at that price it would be possible, if a fixed ratio were established, by tendering at a higher value than 42d., to make

a larger profit and increase the quantity tendered to the Mint and request that it should be returned in coin. The result would be to produce that excess of silver coinage which it was the object of the Latin Union in 1873 to put an end to. Why should the members of the Latin Union decline to continue the system which prevailed up to 1873? I can only assume—I do not positively know—that the increase of the stores of silver alarmed the members of the Latin Union. The German Government declined to continue the coinage of silver. My hon. Friend behind me has referred to the Indian mills and the bounty which the fall in silver confers upon them. I quite agree that the Indian producer is at some advantage as compared with this country. Admitting that the English merchant is at some disadvantage as compared with the factory owner in Bombay, we cannot generalise from that on the whole trade with India. The statistics show that in 1873 990,000,000 yards of cotton goods were exported from the United Kingdom to British India. That figure increased in 1877 to 1,305,000,000 yards; in 1882 to 1,522,000,000 yards; and in 1887 to 1,812,000,000 yards. In other words, in spite of the enormous development of the cotton trade in India, our exports to India of cotton goods increased 50 per cent. between 1877 and 1887.

*Sir W. HOULDSWORTH: May I explain that the Indian mills do not manufacture piece goods to any great extent? The question is as to the yarns they produce.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: My hon. Friend is in possession of technical knowledge which I do not possess, and I am quite sure he is accurate in his statement; but I may at least rely on this: that notwithstanding all the disadvantages which I admit the exchange imposes on the English merchant, there has been during the last 15 years a very considerable increase in the cotton trade with India, although during that period the rate of exchange has fallen from 1s. 11d. to 1s. 5d. Therefore the trade must have been, on the whole, profitable, and no doubt it has been conducted with the wisdom and skill which Lancashire merchants always display in their business. The value of the exports of the United Kingdom to India—and that means largely the export of Lancashire goods—shows an increase of 14 per cent. during the quinquennial period ending 1882, and another increase of 14 per cent. during the quinquennial period ending 1887. I admit that there has been an enormous increase in the number of spindles and looms in India and a great increase in the export of yarn. In 1876 the spindles numbered 1,100,000, and in 1887 they numbered 2,200,000. Seeing that we share in the prosperity of India, I ask whether that is a circumstance to be deplored—whether we have any right to regret that India is developing manufactures and supplying so largely that part of the world with its manufactures? Would it be right, by adopting any change in our financial policy, to check an industry which appears to be so successful? My hon. Friend said that the ratio to be determined by any particular international agreement was a matter of no consequence. I think it is a matter of very considerable consequence. The very first question that would be asked of us if we proposed a Conference would be, "What ratio do you propose to fix between the values of silver and gold? We are very large holders of silver, and we shall be largely influenced by the view which you take. Silver at the present moment is 45d. or 46d. an ounce. Before we enter this Conference we want to know whether you are prepared to re-monetise silver at the price which it cost us some 10 or 15 years ago." If a man had debts owing to him he would, I think, hesitate to receive payment for them in silver forced 20 or 30 per cent. above its present value. I listened attentively to the speech of the hon. Gentleman who opened the debate, and I observed that he was of opinion that, somehow or other, those to whom debts are due are exacting by fraud something like £30,000,000 a year from their debtors. I have not been able to see how he arrived at that conclusion. I do see that he would propose to pay them in a currency and metal which would probably be worth less by £30,000,000 a year than the metal and currency in which they are at present entitled to be paid.

*Mr. S. SMITH: My argument was that £200,000,000 are annually paid by this country for fixed charges, contracted mostly when gold and silver were at a ratio of 15½ to 1. The demonetisation of silver lowered the value of silver 30 per cent. and increased that of gold 40 per cent.; and as the increased purchasing power of gold is due to this circumstance, creditors are now receiving 20 per cent. more than they are entitled to on the basis on which the debts were contracted.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I should like the hon. Gentleman to go into a court of morals and endeavour to prove his case. I should be glad to listen to the argument that would be urged on both sides, and to the decision that would be given. He says that these debts were contracted on a bi-metallic basis. They were contracted upon the basis of the currency which was established in 1816. Every man who has borrowed in gold is bound to pay in gold, and even in America there are gold debts and silver debts. This is not the first time that the House of Commons has debated the subject of bi-metallism. My attention has been drawn to a Motion made by Mr. Attwood just 60 years ago. He moved—

> "That it is expedient to repeal so much of the Act 56 George III., c. 68, as declares gold coins the only legal tender in payment of all sums beyond the amount of 40s., and to establish that gold and silver coins of the realm, coined in the relative proportion of 15½ lb. weight of sterling silver to 1 lb. of sterling gold, shall be a legal tender in all money engagements, as directed and ordered by the Proclamation of the fourth year of George I."

When the hon. Gentleman opposite is prepared to put a distinct proposition before the House as to the value at which silver is to be re-monetised we may understand what it will involve. It was pointed out by Mr. Herries, in the debate on Mr. Attwood's Motion, that—

> "Every man who had claims payable upon demand, every man who held notes of small or great value, every man who had debts outstanding would, if he secured the amount of what was due to him before this Resolution passed into law, get the whole of his money; whereas if he delayed beyond that period he could only get £95 for every £100."

To pass such a Resolution, Mr. Herries said, would be the greatest of disasters to a mercantile country. It would result in this: that all those who were entitled to demand money advanced by them would instantly require that it should be paid, and in the coin and currency in which the debt had been contracted. Mr. Herries pointed out, with overwhelming force, that the inevitable result of such a sudden change in the basis of our circulation and mercantile transactions would be to produce a panic, with absolutely disastrous consequences. A change is proposed to be made because it would be advantageous to the debtor, But if that be so, the creditor has a right to say, "I will not wait for this change. I insist upon having while I can all that belongs to me." I appeal to hon. Gentlemen, considering the vast credit transactions which go on in this country, considering the transactions which we have with the whole world, to form some idea of the disasters which would result from such a desire on the part of the creditors to claim what was due to them before such a change was made. Sir Robert Peel, on that occasion, said the notion of a double standard was utterly fallacious and would be found utterly impracticable. I entertain the same view. I believe that the proposal is impracticable, and that any attempt to carry it out would produce a terrible state of disaster. I need not apologise for quoting the words of Lord Althorp, when he said—

> "He was perfectly satisfied that it would be utterly impossible to alter the value of our money without producing an effect upon the commerce of the country that, with reference not only to our exchanges with foreign countries but to our domestic affairs, must be in the highest degree mischievous and destructive. It was of the utmost importance that the measure of value should remain fixed, and he, for one, therefore, would not consent to any further alteration in our monetary system."

There has been throughout the discussion a suggestion of the scarcity of money, and the necessity of monetising silver in order to afford sufficient currency for the transactions of the world. I speak with great humility, because I am not a great financial authority; but it does appear to me that silver and gold have little to do beyond constituting a measure of value —a measure of value something like that famous standard yard locked up in the Board of Trade. Within the last few years there has been a development of our banking system all over the world to such an extent that gold for the purpose of actual commerce and trade has become simply the measure of value, and I am not able in the slightest degree to detect any evidence of a deficiency of gold. One of the first means of detecting it would be in in the discounts. A scarcity of gold raises the rate of discount. But during the last 15 years the rate of discount has been extremely low in this country. There has been no absence of credit, and there has been no deficiency in that material without which enterprise cannot proceed. I have looked into the average rates of discount from 1874 to 1888, and I find that in only one year, 1882, when it was $4\frac{1}{8}$, did the average exceed $3\frac{3}{4}$. It ranged from 3 and $3\frac{1}{4}$ to 2, $2\frac{1}{2}$, $2\frac{3}{4}$, and $2\frac{3}{8}$. That is a conclusive proof that there was plenty of what I should call mercantile money for the purposes of the business of the world. There has been a great fall of prices in wheat, and many other articles; but I venture to maintain the opinion that that fall is due rather to the abundance of money than to its deficiency, to the enterprise which has prevailed throughout the world in a time of general peace, and the facility with which men can enter into vast commercial transactions. We are told that railways and steamboats existed before 1874. They did exist; but the development of the world by railways and steamboats has been something absolutely enormous during the last 15 years. There is no comparison between 1890 and 1874 in the facilities afforded to the trader, the merchant, the producer, in all parts of the world. Railways bring produce from distant parts of India, for instance, to the coast, steamers bring it from the coast to our wharves and quays at a price which hardly exceeds the cost of transit from New York 20 years ago. These changes account largely for the great fall in prices which has taken place. But that fall is not universal. It is confined largely to articles of universal production, which can be brought to our markets from all parts of the world. But articles limited in production, such as articles of art, have increased, and will continue to increase, in value. If that be the case, the argument based upon the fall of silver is not a sound argument. I agree with the paragraph in the Report which says that the change proposed would be a leap in the dark. I feel that it would be a tremendous leap in the dark, and that we have no evidence that the change proposed would be a sound one, or that it would not produce disastrous consequences. On these grounds, not that I am indifferent to the views expressed by the Lancashire operatives, or that I do not sympathise with those who are in distress, I must for myself individually decline to assume the responsibility of recommending to the House a change which I regard as dangerous, and as not justified by any of the facts or elements involved in the case.

(7.26.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I was glad to hear the sentiments of strong common-sense that fell from the First Lord of the Treasury. But I confess I was a little surprised that the head of the English Treasury, on a subject which affects so greatly English commerce and credit, says that he speaks for himself only and individually. I entirely agree in the views the right hon. Gentleman has expressed; but I have also to convey to the House opinions much more valuable than any I could offer. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) has also very clear and definite opinions on the subject, and, occupying the position which he holds, it is right that those opinions should be known. This question goes to the root of the existence of a great commercial country. I confess I have never been able myself to grasp the transcendental formula of "tying two metals by a ratio." That is really a sort of philosophising phrase to express that you want to pay a debt in a metal of less value than that in which the debt was supposed to be contracted. These scientific formulæ of tying metals together by a ratio only conceal what is a very simple fact. It is said that we lived some 15 years ago in the halcyon days of bi-metallism; but if we did, we did not live in that condition by any will or judgment of our own. The judgment of the whole of English statesmen at that time, and down to the present time, was, that there should be a mono-metallic standard. It is supposed that the bi-metallism of France controlled the commercial relations of the world. How could it be that a country which had only a limited foreign trade should be able to operate so immensely on the commercial relations of the world? If this is so admirable a system, why has the Latin Union abandoned it? I have never heard an answer to that question. Why is it that the world, instead of imitating the admirable example of the bi-metallism of France, has rushed to copy the disastrous and ruinous mono-metallism of England?

You may, or you may not, obtain an agreement with other countries; but after you have got an agreement, what security have you that that agreement will be maintained? Supposing that you can get an agreement with the other Powers of Europe in order to make this enormous change, where would you be if one of the Powers in some great crisis, such as a European war, abandoned this agreement? It would knock the keystone out of the whole of the monetary and commercial system of England. At present you have your own financial basis, your own commercial system, which have been unparaleled in the history of the world, founded as they are on the principles on which we now rely. But you are asked to abandon that system and to adopt a system which the advocates of bi-metallism admit can only exist by an almost universal agreement with other Powers. That is to say, you are to go into a partnership with all the other Powers of Europe with respect to your trade, finance, and commercial prosperity. I say that this is a most dangerous thing for you to attempt. Suppose we had been in the position of having an international agreement in 1870. France and Germany were going to war. Supposing Germany had conceived that it would have been of advantage to her in that life struggle to attract a great deal of gold to Germany; and supposing she had been a party to this international agreement, and had thought it would be to her advantage to terminate her connection with the Bi-metallic Union, would she not have done it at once? Of course she would, and the finances of England would have been thrown into a condition of confusion by resting on an agreement of this character. Why is this general agreement wanted? If you choose to overvalue your silver, and to say it shall bear a ratio of 1 to 15 instead of a ratio of 1 to 22, the gold will, of course, go away from the country. But the bi-metallist answer is that if you get a universal agreement the gold has nowhere to go to. Yes; but in the event, say, of Germany receding from the agreement, there would be a place for the gold to go to, and there it would go at once. The result, therefore, is that you place yourselves in a position which depends on a universal agreement, and if one or two of the parties to it withdraw, the whole of your reserve of gold at once goes to them. I protest against making the commercial interests and the financial system of England dependent on an international agreement. It never has been so, and we cannot safely make it so now. The condemnation of the bi-metallic theory is that international agreement is, from the bi-metallists' point of view, absolutely indispensable and necessary to their system. The financial system of England has stood upon its own basis and has not been dependent on international agreement, on the permanence and stability of which no reliance can be placed. You will never get stability in international arrangements. In old days you had the balance of power, which depended on international agreement. How long was it before the Treaties were broken, and then what became of the balance of power? Very much the same fate would overtake you with regard to the balance of metals. I do not understand why, if silver is to be declared by Act of Parliament or International Statute to be of the same value as gold for all the purposes which have been indicated, we should have any gold at all. It seems to me that, if the two metals are to be declared to be of equal value, gold may as well disappear. I remember, during the brief period I was at the Exchequer, that I had the opportunity of talking with Sir Stafford Northcote, and I never shall forget the quiet, humorous contempt with which he treated the subject. He said—"If it be true that you can settle the value of anything by international Statute, why should we have either silver or gold at all? Why not have an international agreement, to the effect that all transactions should be done with leather, as in ancient times?" Why have we had this theory propounded for the revival of prosperity? Men of business want to pay their debts in an appreciated currency; and one of the reasons why I oppose this system is because I am not prepared to raise prices either by Act of Parliament or by international agreement. Unfortunately, I belong to the consuming class: I am not an enemy of low prices: I experience the benefit of them, and I value the low prices of commodities. We are told there is no question that the great disaster which has befallen the world is owing to low prices. But this is not the first time that we have heard this. It is not since bi-metallism was abandoned by the Latin Union that the waves of low prices have appeared. I was reading the other day an instructive book by my friend Mr. Spencer Walpole, in which the author gives an account of the prices in 1820, and the commercial disasters which took place at that time. Exactly the same remedies were proposed then. The first thing which the people who suffer from low prices say is, "Let us tamper with the currency;" and no doubt periods of considerable distress will always induce people to seek strange revenue. That is the reason, no doubt, why these remedies have become more or less popular now. Take the case of India. I am not at all surprised that in Lancashire and elsewhere there should be a certain jealousy at the increase of native Indian production, and I do not complain that those who suffer should complain. But I do complain of the language used on this subject by the Government of India. The Government of India, in the despatches which I have seen, have treated this question as if it was one solely of exchange upon the salaries of Anglo-Indians. ["No."] I have seen appeals to the Protectionist prejudices which are supposed to exist among the English producers; but there is a class of people which the Indian Government might have some consideration for, and that is the native population of India, who are the producers of these commodities. During the short time I was at the Exchequer I wrote a despatch in answer to one from the Indian Government on this question of bi-metallism. The First Lord of the Treasury has hit the nail on the head when he asks, "What is your ratio going to be?" If this theory is true, it may be anything you like. If the philosophical theory is correct, you may declare to-morrow that the value of silver is equal to that of gold. If, when the market value is 1 to 20, you can say it shall be 1 to 15, why should you not say it is 1 to 10, or 1 to 5, or 1 to 1? As the First Lord of the Treasury has said, the great inducement to countries to hold large stocks of silver is the hope that the ratio will be restored to 1 to 15. Now, it is said, "Let us put it at 1 to 20," or at whatever the market price may be. That is exactly what is done on board ship. A man takes an observation of the height of the sun to ascertain when it is 12 o'clock. He reports to the captain that it is 12 o'clock, and the captain says, "Well, make it so." If you had the power of Joshua you might be true bi-metallists. If you are going to take the existing ratio, then your proceedings are totally unnecessary; but if you are going to take something different from the market ratio, then you are going to disturb the whole commercial relations of the world. You cannot get out of that difficulty, which lies really at the bottom of the whole thing. I do not think it is at all a question which depends upon scientific disquisitions. I observe that upon the Royal Commission the men who have practical dealings with money were the men who pronounced against the bi-metallic theory. As far as I know, the principal authorities of the City of London conversant with dealings in money have condemned this experiment. When you are comparing our situation with that of other countries, you must remember that, in proportion to the greatness of our wealth and population, our wealth and prosperity depend in a far greater degree on foreign trade than do those of any other country in the world. The internal trade of America, Germany, and France is of much more importance than the foreign trade of those countries; but it is not so in the case of England. I believe the mono-metallic system which we have adopted is a sound system. It is the system under which we have prospered, and in which we have been followed by the other nations of Europe in very recent times. With Pitt, in that famous sentence of his, we may say of our financial system that "we have saved ourselves by our firmness, and Europe by our example." The nations of Europe have been disposed to follow the principles which have led to the great prosperity which has placed England upon a commercial pinnacle. I confess I should see any departure from that system with the greatest alarm. Occupying the position we do in the commerce of the world, I do not see how we are to go round to the nations of the world and enter into a sort of Dutch auction with them, in which we are to fix the ratio. Are we to go to one country and ask them what they want, and to another country and ask them what they want? Is it possible you are going to place the commerce of England in such a position as that? I will not say that that would be a most undignified position; but I think it would be a most dangerous one for a great commercial nation like England to occupy. I share with the right hon. Gentleman opposite the sympathy he expressed for the distress which has existed in Lancashire; but, as the right hon. Gentleman said, exports have increased to India, which shows that the relation between the gold of England and the silver of India has not prevented the increase of exports to the latter country. I find that in Lancashire there were in 1870 33,000,000 spindles at work, while in 1885 there were 40,000,000, and that the numbers of power looms in the same years were respectively 440,000 and 506,000. No doubt you might have hoped for, and we should have been glad to see, greater progress than that; but during the whole of that period the advance has been continuous, both as regards power looms and spindles. The same advance appears in the number of persons employed. In 1870 the total number of persons employed was 450,000, as against 504,000 in 1885. That does not look to me like a drooping or a ruined industry. Let us hope, then, as in former times of distress, so it will be now, that the period of distress may pass away, and that we may see, as we have seen before, times of reviving prosperity. Do not let us, after a few years of distress, overthrow that sound financial system which I believe has been the keystone of the prosperity of this great Empire.

*(8.30.) MR. T. H. SIDEBOTTOM (Stalybridge): I do not often trouble the House with any observations; but, after deep study, I am convinced that this currency question is of such transcendent importance to every one of us, and so vitally affects every man and woman in this country, that I hope the House will allow me to make a few remarks. I was first induced particularly to consider this subject by the depression which began to make itself seriously and acutely felt in the general trade of the country, especially in the great cotton industry, in the year 1878. I was at that time Member for the large manufacturing constituency I have now the honour to represent; and being also myself an extensive cotton spinner and manufacturer I felt impelled, alike by duty to my constituents and by self-interest, to endeavour without prejudice, and with an entirely open mind, to investigate, and, if possible, find out what really lay at the root of the mischief. And I came then to the deliberate conclusion that our troubles were mainly to be ascribed to the suspension of the coinage of silver in France and the Latin Union, and the consequent fall, fluctuations, and uncertain value of that metal as measured by gold, and to the great appreciation of gold thereby caused. The subject at that time was but little appreciated or understood, and if a man ever mentioned bi-metallism he did so only with bated breath and whispered humbleness. But I entertained such a strong and decided opinion upon it that I ventured to bring the subject under the attention of this House in May, 1879, when, after alluding to the decreasing supply of gold, I stated that it seemed to my mind certain that the great depression throughout the world in nearly every interest and every trade was, to a great extent, due to the contraction of the currency caused by the demonetisation of silver, and the degradation of that metal to a mere commodity, such as iron, or tin, or lead; and, consequently, that the true remedy for our misfortunes—the true, plain, and direct way to revive our waning trade, to arrest the ruinous fall in property, and to bring back general prosperity—was to restore silver to its former position as a partner with gold in the currency of the world. This was more than 10 years ago, and my view has been strongly confirmed by everything which has since occurred. It would ill become me to occupy the time of the House by entering into a long dissertation on the details of this silver, or, rather, gold and silver question; every Member has had a copy of the final Report of the Royal Commission. The arguments on both sides are stated in this Report with perfect fairness, and considered, criticised, and dissected with consummate ability; and I venture to say that a more

able and exhaustive treatise on the subject was never written. I have read it every word, and earnestly commend its perusal and study to every man who wishes to thoroughly grasp and comprehend the subject. He cannot then fail to form a clear conception of the evils brought upon us by the fundamental changes which have of late years taken place in our currency conditions, and will, I am sure, agree that the thanks of the country are owing to every member of that Commission. But whilst abstaining from entering into details, I hope the House will permit me briefly to consider a few of the aspects of this great question. From 1803 to 1873 the Mint of France was ready to convert into coin all silver brought to it, such coin being legal tender at a fixed ratio with gold of 15½ to 1; and in the States forming the Latin Union a similar law was in force from 1865 to 1873, the fixed ratio being also the same, that is, 15½ ounces of silver to 1 ounce of gold; therefore, no person possessing silver would, of course, part with it for less. This ratio virtually controlled the market, and, as a matter of fact, for the first 70 years of this century the extreme variation in the market value scarcely exceeded 3 per cent. in either direction; but in consequence of the large amount of silver coined in 1873, owing to the monetary changes in Germany, a Convention was entered into in January, 1874, between France and the States of the Latin Union, limiting the coinage; and the consequence was that silver went down in value from about 60d. per ounce to a little over 42d. or over 28 per cent.; and though it has now somewhat recovered, in consequence of the anticipated legislation in America, no one may say how much lower it is still destined to fall. I beg the House specially to note this fact. From the beginning of the century till 1873 the gold price of silver practically never varied, although the variations in the relative production of gold and silver were far greater during that period than they have been since or are ever likely to be again; but the marked divergence in value of the two metals only occurred when the free coinage of silver by the Mints of Europe ceased, but then began immediately. It must also be remembered in this connection that the precious metals do not perish as other commodities perish. Their aggregate accumulation in use at present is estimated at £1,900,000,000 of silver and £1,500,000,000 of gold; consequently a variation in their annual production constitutes merely a fractional difference of the whole. Concurrently also with France and the Latin Union closing their Mints to silver, there has been a tremendous falling off in the gold production of the world, just when a much larger quantity was required, and the result has naturally been a very great appreciation of gold. Previous to the discovery of the gold mines of California and Australia, the annual production of gold in the world was about £6,000,000; but these discoveries increased the supply six-fold, to £35,000,000 or £36,000,000, and the consequence was great and general prosperity, not to say inflation. It has now fallen, however, to under £20,000,000, whilst at the same time Germany has recently introduced a gold currency of £80,000,000, the United States have resumed specie payments requiring £100,000,000, Italy £20,000,000 for a like purpose, and £4,000,000 have gone annually to India; and the Mints of Europe having been also at this most inopportune moment closed to silver nearly half the money supply of the world has been cut off, and we have seen the natural effect in the decreased value of commodities and the heavy fall in property. But, with the permission of the House, I will endeavour to show a little more in detail the disastrous consequences which have resulted from this state of things, from this dislocation of silver and gold, and then indicate what seems to me the obvious remedy and the only course calculated to rescue our commerce from the ruin with which it is threatened. As has been well stated by the hon. Member for Flintshire, the total fixed charges payable out of the industry of the country are estimated at from £150,000,000 to £200,000,000 a year. Now as this is a permanent and fixed load, and gold is the scale by which the wealth of the country is measured, it is evident that if gold becomes dearer, if it appreciates, as it has done since the free coinage of silver was suspended in 1873, this tremendous load becomes greater and presses more heavily on the productive resources of the country. The appreciation of gold and the great fall in prices have, in fact, transferred about 10 per cent. of the wealth of the country to the money-lending and annuitant class, made a small class of rich people still richer, but robbed the hard working, toiling, industrious class for the benefit of those who toil not neither do they spin. It seems to me that both my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury and also the hon. Gentleman opposite are labouring under some confusion of ideas; because our belief and contention is that, under a system of bi-metallism, it would make no difference whatever whether debts were paid in gold or silver, for the two metals would have a relative fixed value to each other, and be mutually interchangeable at that value. No doubt contracts ought to be held sacred; but the right hon. Gentleman and others will not, I hope, forget that many contracts have been made under practically the same circumstances and conditions as those we wish to restore; and surely some sympathy onght to be spared for the unfortunate debtors who, during all these long years, have, as a matter of fact, been paying about one-third more than they expected or virtually contracted to pay. I entreat the House to consider, for a moment, the intolerable hardship which, quite unwittingly and without the least design or intention, has been inflicted on debtors and upon everyone who has charges of any description to pay. The debts and charges have been incurred under totally different conditions to those now existing, and when an entirely different state of things prevailed. The stupendous changes which have taken place in our monetary arrangements have been quite unforseen and unexpected, and, of course, without the knowledge or assent of the unfortunate debtors; and yet there is but too much reason to fear that, in consequence of these changes, there is no prospect but absolute irretrievable ruin for many of these unfortunate persons. It is all very well to moralise and say people must take the consequences of their acts; that the laws of political economy must not be interfered with; the property and wealth and land of the country must change hands, and all the rest of it; but I think the House will be of opinion that if, without injury to anyone, something can be done to remedy or mitigate the injustice, and to bring back and restore the same conditions as approximately prevailed at the time the unfortunate debtors contracted their obligations, any legislation to accomplish this, however imperfectly, will be only equalled in its beneficence by its wisdom and justice. But I should like, with the permission of the House, to consider how and in what way our industries in this country are particularly affected, and also briefly to glance at the hardships and injury inflicted upon India. The two largest industries in this country are agriculture and the cotton trade. Much of the cotton trade is with India, or other silver using countries. In one portion of our own Empire, England, gold is the standard; in another portion, India, silver; and the difficulty of carrying on any satisfactory trade between the two under such conditions is very great indeed. There can be no doubt (as is stated in the Report) that an unstable and fluctuating exchange between gold and silver has tended to foster trade between countries having the same standard to the prejudice of those having a different standard; and English manufacturers have, in fact, had practically to pay the whole loss in the exchange by taking less price for their goods. It may be said—and this was, indeed, the argument of my right hon. Friend the leader of the House—how can this be so, with the large and increasing export of cotton goods to India? But the large exports are no proof to the contrary, for the production of Lancashire goods is so enormous, owing chiefly to the abuse of the Limited Liabilty Law, that they must go somewhere or our people starve, and they have long been sent to such markets as would consume them irrespective of cost, and in many cases at a continuous loss. The Indian trade has increased in spite of the difficulties in exchange owing to other causes; it has received a great impetus from the development of railways, the removal of the Import Duties, and similar matters; and at this moment it would doubtless have been far greater still if the exchange had remained steady, for it will be observed the same expansion of exports has not taken place with China, which is also a silver-using country, but where there has not been the same internal development. A few years ago, the Import Duties which were levied in India on cotton goods were felt to be an injury to Lancashire. Both employers and employed united against them, and they were happily abolished. They amounted to 5 per cent.; but the present state of the silver question, and the great fall in exchange, practically imposes a differential duty of nearly 30 per cent. upon Lancashire goods, as compared with goods manufactured in India. For example, if I, as an English manufacturer, send a piece of cloth to India for which to cover cost, I must receive back 10s.; and the Indian buyer pays, and has been in the habit of paying, 10s. for it, or in his money five rupees. When the exchange was at par, and the rupee worth 2s., I received my 10s.; but prices in India being about the same, and every single rupee there retaining the same purchasing power as before, the Indian buyer cannot afford to pay more than five rupees as at first, when the Exchange has fallen to 1s. 4d., which means 6s. 8d. for me instead of 10s. It would be indeed surprising if anyone possessing the hard head with which Lancashire men are generally credited could entertain the remotest doubt that if 3s. 4d. more was received for every piece of cloth sold at 10s. everyone in Lancashire would be proportionately benefited, for operatives, employers, agents, and merchants would have so much the more to divide amongst them. It may be argued that there really would not be this difference, because if the loss on the exchange was less the Indian buyer would then pay fewer rupees for the goods. Well, it is conceivable that the Indian buyer might secure a portion of the benefit; but even then, if he succeeded in obtaining his goods at a lower price, English manufacturers would be still benefited, because there would be an extended demand for our production as the rupee price was lowered, whilst it would be a distinct advantage to the consumer in India. But it may be said, why not invest the rupees paid for our goods in Indian produce and so recover with one hand what we lose with the other. Well, this may possibly be done by a few wealthy merchants who are prepared for such transactions; but it is not merchants who bear the loss, because, naturally, before purchasing and sending goods to India, or any other silver using country, a merchant ascertains and calculates how much he can realise home, and will only purchase the goods accordingly, and the greater the loss on the exchange the less he will pay; so that the real losers are English spinners and manufacturers, who are compelled to work their mills at any cost for the sake of keeping their people together, keeping down their very large fixed expenses, and finding employment for the manufacturing population of the country. It appears, therefore, that the loss in exchange amounts to a differential duty of about 30 per cent. in favour of the Indian manufacturer. He has already other advantages, owing to his geographical position, the low rate of wages paid, and the being allowed to work almost unlimited hours, whilst we in England are restricted to 56 hours; but these advantages, great as they are, are by no means equal to the other, and cannot explain the enormous increase which has taken place in Indian mills, because this increase has only occurred since the fall in the exchange became so pronounced, and when, as a matter of fact, the geographical advantage was lessened owing to the fall in freights. But that the English manufacturer has a real, tangible, and decided advantage is proved by the hard fact that the exports of cotton yarn from India to China, Hong Kong, and Japan during the last six or seven years have increased between 300,000,000lbs. and 400,000,000lbs., whilst the exports from England have decreased more than 30,000,000lbs. The natural consequence is that cotton mills are being erected on a colossal scale in India to the displacement of English mills and English labour; whilst one of the few industries in this country which seems to be in a really prosperous and healthy condition is that of machine making for filling Indian mills. I will not occupy the time of the House with enlarging upon the effects of these currency changes on British agriculture. No doubt the present disastrous state of that greatest of all our industries is owing to a combination and a variety of causes—virgin soils, railways, fast ocean steamers, and low freights, have brought heavily taxed land in this country into direct competition with the vast prairies of the Western World—but over and above and in addition to all these causes British agriculture has suffered most severely from this currency mischief. It is admitted by every one, except my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham (Mr. James Maclean) (at all events, the 12 Royal Commissioners are unanimous in saying so), that the purchasing power of the rupee in India is as great as ever; therefore, with the Indian exchange, about 1s. 4d., every British sovereign is worth really 15 rupees instead of 10; and the purchasing power of each single rupee being in India as great as ever, each one of them will purchase as much wheat in India as ever, consequently the buyer gets 15 rupees' worth of Indian wheat for a sovereign, instead of 10, or about half as much again as formerly. Comment on the above facts is needless; he who runs may read the principal cause which lies at the root of the depression in British agriculture, and may also with confidence predict what will be its fate in the not distant future unless something is done. Then, again, let us examine for a moment what is the effect upon India, and the taxpayers there, of the present state of affairs. As bearing on this point the opinion of the six Commissioners, who hesitate to adopt bi-metallism, is important. They say, in the Report, that—

> "The exceptional position of India causes it to be affected in an especial manner. Whilst its taxes are collected in silver a substantial portion of its outgoings, including the very heavy payments which have to be made in this country, are necessarily disbursed in gold. And they have no hesitation in expressing the conclusion that the changes in the relative value of the precious metals are causing important evils and inconvenience to the Government of India."

In other words, the Government of India owe in gold and collect the taxes in silver. Consequently, for every 16d. sent to England in payment of her debt, India, with the exchange at 16d., has to collect nearly 2s. Well, indeed, may we hear such disastrous accounts of the grinding taxation in India, and of the difficulty experienced by Indian statesmen in making receipts meet expenditures. A monstrous hardship and injustice is also inflicted upon retired officers, gentlemen of the Civil Service, and others, who having spent the best years of their lives in the service of their country in India, and returned home at last to end their days in their native land, find themselves mulcted of about one-third of their incomes from no fault, but simply from this currency disturbance. I would remind the House also that there is no security whatever that we have reached the bottom of the abyss, or that a further fall in silver may not any day be experienced, and a further discrepancy be established between the standard in India and the standard in England. Well, what is the remedy? I have already quoted part of the opinion of the six Commissioners who hesitate to adopt bi-metallism. These same gentlemen go on to say that—

> "No measure has been suggested that claims to be anything like so complete and thorough a remedy as the adoption of bi-metallism; and that in any conditions fairly to be contemplated in the future, so far as they can forecast them from the experience of the past, a stable ratio might be maintained if bi-metallism were accepted and strictly adhered to."

I think the House will consider this pretty strong language as expressing the opinion of the six Commissioners who are supposed to be against bi-metallism, and it is extremely valuable as an answer to those who are making capital out of their supposed opposition. These six most able gentlemen, after hearing the evidence, after long consideration and study, and under deep responsibility, state their deliberate opinion that no remedy is so direct or effectual as bi-metallism, and think it would keep the value of silver uniform as compared with gold. Why, then, do they not take the plunge, and unite with their six remaining colleagues in recommending its prompt and early adoption! I can discover no reason except anxiety to avoid doing mischief, and groundless and chimerical apprehensions. Pausing, as it were, on the brink of a dark and unknown stream, they seem to ask themselves whither its broken and tempestuous waters lead, and shrink with halting tread from trusting themselves to its swift and foaming waves. I think, however, they have, in fact, admitted the whole case, and proved that the real, direct, true, and only remedy is that suggested by the other six Commissioners, namely, the assembling of an International Conference, with the view of establishing bi-metallism, that is, some fixed ratio between silver and gold. I do not wish to dogmatise, or to say what that ratio should be; it is essentially a matter for discussions, and for the consideration of any International Conference which may be appointed. There are many and strong arguments in favour of fixing it at the present value, of about 20 or 22 to 1, and others for the old ratio of 15½ to 1. But what I earnestly wish to press upon the attention of the House is that something should be done; that we should make some effort to remedy the present evils. Bi-metallism is nothing new; it existed in France for the whole of this century. Up to 1873 its effects were felt in all countries; and it is most significant that there should have been such unexampled depression in every industry simultaneously with the system coming to an end. We must expect strong, and powerful, and persistent opposition, particularly from the great financial houses, who own the gold, and want to retain it at its present value. But, after all, *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.* And I cannot believe that the people of this country will allow our industries to continue so heavily handicapped; but, in the long run, the interests of the many will prevail. England will join such a Conference as that we suggested, to thoroughly discuss and ventilate this great subject; and the collective wisdom of nations will devise a remedy, and fix a ratio of exchange between silver and gold which shall ensure stability, prevent violent fluctuations, and do something to restore prosperity to the long-suffering industries of the world.

*(9.17.) MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): Mr. Speaker, I may perhaps be permitted to draw attention to the Amendment before the House—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the evils which have resulted from the divergence in the relative value of silver and gold following the monetary changes which took place in Europe in 1873, can best be dealt with by a Conference of the chief commercial nations of the world, called to consider whether a bi-metallic system can be re-established by international agreement in the interests of all the nations concerned."

That does not go so far as the Report of the Royal Commission, signed by my right hon. Friend the Member for the London University, that a bi-metallic system can be established. I believe that this is what the Commissioners agreed to, that in any conditions fairly to be contemplated, so far as we can forecast them from experience of the past, a suitable ratio might be maintained.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I am sure my hon. Friend does not wish to misrepresent me. I have already pointed out, in the course of the debate, that Mr. Birch and I dissented from that opinion.

MR. HOYLE: In that case the Blue Book has been misprinted. I find Sir John Lubbock's name appended to the Report, and also that of Mr. J. W. Birch, ex-Governor of the Bank of England. It is quite true that these two gentlemen did add a foot note:—

> "No doubt the adhesion of England, Germany, and the United States would be of very important additional strength, and we do not deny that such combination might for a considerable time be able to maintain the ratio adopted. Having regard, however, to the great uncertainty as to the probable future production of the mines, and to the use of the precious metals in the arts of a number of countries which would still remain outside the combination, we doubt whether any given ratio can be found maintainable."

It seems to me that foot note shows an uncertain condition of mind which is hardly worthy of my right hon. Friend.

SIR J. LUBBOCK: May I just explain? It is usual, if you agree with the bulk of a Report, to sign it stating the points on which you differ. There was no hesitation on my part, or on that of my friend Mr. Birch.

*MR. HOYLE: I acquit my right hon. Friend of all blame, and accept his explanation. Before we can understand the evils to which the Motion refers, we must consider the condition of things that prevailed before the "divergence" took place. It is, of course, well-known to the House that, previous to 1873, this country enjoyed great prosperity. Industry and commerce flourished, and the National Revenue went up by "leaps and bounds." The summit of that prosperity was reached in 1874, concurrently with great alterations on the Continent of Europe in the currency. The decline of prosperity affected all trades; and agriculture has suffered severely during the last 16 years. I hope hon. Members acquainted with agriculture will tell us whether farms have been unlet and unlettable, whether fields have remained untilled, and whether land has tumbled down to grass and weeds; whether farmers, gathering up their little possessions and taking what remained of their property, have gone, with their trained skill, to other lands; and whether labourers, biding for a time, have finally gone to the large towns and seaports to swell the ranks of casual and unskilled labour? But perhaps I may speak of the staple industry of the county from which I come — Lancashire. Before 1873, merchants, in exporting Manchester goods, either sent them out in the grey state, or had them bleached, dyed, or printed, according to circumstances. In most cases a bill was drawn against the shipment which put the shipper into funds, but it was only when the goods were sold abroad, and the proceeds remitted home to close the transaction, that the merchant and those who joined him in the venture were able to count up their gains. When silver fell and the rate of exchange dropped the merchants could not carry on that mode of doing business because of the losses entailed. Either manufacturers must consign the goods themselves, or their correspondents in foreign countries must send orders at a fixed and certain price. Native indents, as they are called, that is, orders to buy goods laid down in India or China, in stated months, became the rule. A merchant receiving such an order first ascertained at what rate a banker would undertake to fix exchange six or nine months ahead. He then reckoned freight, brokerage, commissions, and other charges, and, after deducting all these from the silver price offered, the balance left was all that could be bid to the manufacturer as the price for the goods. The method of doing business was completely revolutionised. The rate of exchange became the dominating factor. An East India merchant, whose principal business is that of exporting cotton from India to various European countries, in giving evidence to the Commission, fully detailed the features of the old and new systems of conducting that business, and gave illustrations of the rise and fall in prices owing to oscillations in the rate of exchange. The following questions were put to him from the Chair:—

> "What I want to know is whether the rapid alteration in the value of cotton in India due to the exchange is or is not pernicious to the trade?—It rose rapidly before August in consequence of one alteration in the exchange; it fell rapidly after August in consequence of another alteration in the exchange.
>
> "Is not that a great inconvenience to the grower in India?"—Well, of course to the grower fluctuations are to that extent unpleasant. For the exporter it practically makes no difference. We have only to wait a little till prices adjust themselves.
>
> "You simply work the machine by which the cotton is transferred from the grower in India to the buyer in England?—Certainly. . . .
>
> "You have just explained that the machine is practically so perfect that you receive no violent shock from even the most violent oscillations in exchange. What I want to know is whether these violent oscillations do not do harm to the grower, to the man who is not part of the mere machinery of transfer, but the man who produced the goods?—Well, of course if the price of silver rises rapidly the grower does not like it. If we have a fall in silver and are able to offer him 10 or 15 per cent. more for his produce he likes it very much."
>
> "It is in your power, directly you see that operations are not going to yield a profit, to stop operations?—Certainly........"

Now, what struck me as very remarkable in that evidence was that the witness was apparently quite unconscious of the startling character of his evidence. The swing of the exchange pendulum, owing to rises and falls in silver, made a difference in the selling price of commodities of 15 per cent. first on one side, and then 15 per cent. on the other. The skinning of eels is unpleasant to the eels, but to the man who holds the knife it makes no difference—he need not cut his own finger; it is his own fault if he does. The House will see that this witness proves beyond a doubt that commodities rise or fall in value as the rate of exchange goes up or down. If there were any doubt, however, it would be dispelled by the testimony of another witness—a shipper of manufactured goods from this country to India. He said, in answer to a question put to him—

> "Any one acquainted with the Manchester Market can testify that business there is always checked when a fall in silver takes place, and that Manchester prices have generally ultimately to give way.
>
> "But the one person that cannot save himself is the manufacturer?—He is the worst on the whole.
>
> "The merchant can save himself, but the manufacturer cannot?—Yes."

As exchange fell there was always a diminished amount left for the English manufacturer? The "machine" was perfect. "The merchant," it was expressly said in evidence, "need take no risk unless he liked." The loss was bound to fall on the producers. The "machine" stops until, to use the euphemism employed by one of the witnesses, "prices had adjusted themselves," which means that until commodities had fallen in price equal to the fall in silver. But while this evil was in development, others were in progress. The depression in the agricultural districts at home lessened the demand for cotton goods, and falling prices automatically raised the barriers to trade in Protectionist countries, in this way—a fixed duty of 2s. 6d. on an article that formerly cost 10s. was 25 per cent., but when the article fell to 7s. 6d., the duty became 33 per cent.; and if it fell to 5s., the duty was then 50 per cent. Diminished demand from the United Kingdom and an aggravation of Protection shut Lancashire out of the markets, previously supplied; and so arose the cry for "new markets." The home trade could not absorb its usual quantity of goods; Protectionist countries were closed by the automatic rise in the proportion of duty; but India and China were open at a price, they could take unlimited quantities of cotton fabrics, so that the production was more and more poured into Eastern markets. That increased supply compelled English producers to accept silver prices. In addition to those adverse circumstances it began to be perceived that cotton spinning and manufacturing could be carried on in the East without loss by exchange. The greater the fall in the exchangeable value of the rupee, the greater the inducement to cut out English made goods, and thus an expansion of spinning and weaving occurred in India, such as has never been paralleled in any industry requiring technical skill. The profits made in Indian cotton mills are so large that they work on Sundays as well as week days. Some of them run 84 hours a week, and the average is a little over 80 hours a week, as against 56½ hours in this country. Rich English capitalists and rich Indian capitalists are adding to their wealth by these means. Let me say that I believe it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a man in Lancashire who would lift a finger against the prosperity of India or retard the welfare of her people. If India has geographical or any other advantages she is entitled to make the most of them, and it is clearly our duty to assist her in making the most of them. The welfare of India and the bettering of the condition of her people are British interests. In reference to the cotton industry in India, the Royal Commissioners say—

> "Estimates have been laid before us which tend to show that the Indian manufacturer, if unassisted by exchange considerations, would be unable to compete with the English manufacturer successfully in any market. The technical character of the questions involved in these calculations makes it very difficult to pronounce an opinion on the subject, but we understand that a Committee of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce has been carefully considering the question, and that their conclusions, which, on such a point, will have a special value, will shortly be made public."

The following is a copy of the Resolution of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce requesting the Board to undertake the inquiry referred to by the Royal Commissioners—

> "That in view of the recent very rapid increase of cotton spinning in India and the exports of yarn therefrom, more especially to China and Japan, while at the same time there has been a very serious check to the growth of Lancashire yarn exports to those countries, the directors be requested to examine and report to a special meeting of the Chamber as to the causes and circumstances which have thus enabled Bombay spinners to supersede those of Lancashire."

That inquiry extended over 10 months, and the most competent men in the different branches of the trade were invited to give evidence. In such an investigation, conducted by laymen, great scope was, as is usual, given to witnesses. There was a good deal of theory, of opinion, and of argument which were entitled to great respect, even when they failed to carry conviction; but when the witnesses detailed their daily experiences, and gave facts within their own knowledge, their testimony was absolutely unimpeachable. A witness who has, perhaps, sold more cotton yarn than any man living, said—

> "The great factor which has comparatively taken away an important section of our trade is the fall in exchange. It is utterly impossible, with the silver price of exchange, for the Lancashire man, when his money is reduced 25 per cent., in exchanging from silver to gold, to rival the Bombay man, his competitor, whose money is not reduced in value."

And the witness went on to say—

> "The demand never stopped in the spring of 1887, although we were unable to take orders

during the months of March and April, and until the third week in May, when we accepted a reduction in price equivalent to the fall in exchange."

The "machine" does its work so effectually that prices must go down in Manchester. The mills may stop, of course, and that is the alternative. So large are the quantities of goods sold to silver-using countries that prices all round are lowered. There cannot be two prices for the same article—one for gold-using countries and another for silver-using countries. If any one demand, either home or foreign, yields better Returns than another, there is an immediate increase of supply, with a corresponding decrease of supply to those markets giving less favourable results, and thus a level of prices all round is quickly reached. The Board of the Manchester Chamber concluded its inquiry, but, not being agreed, two Reports were prepared. A copy of the evidence taken and copies of the two Reports were sent to each member of the Chamber, and a special meeting was called to consider the Reports. After full discussion, the Chamber adopted the Report, which said that—

> "The principal cause which has enabled Bombay spinners to supersede those of Lancashire in exporting yarn to China and Japan is the great fall in Eastern exchange since 1873."

Therefore, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, being largely expert, after an exhaustive inquiry extending over 10 months, decided that conflicting currency laws in the same Empire were giving a bonus for the transfer of a great industry of that Empire from one part of its dominion to another. Another evil arising out of the divergence between gold and silver is the lowering of the quality of English goods. It is rare to find now any make of cotton goods that has retained the character it had 20 years ago. Mr. Stephen Williamson, M.P., told the Royal Commission that merchants did not wish to ship inferior goods, but he said the people in silver-using countries had small silver coins in common use, and when the exchangeable value of these coins fell there must, of necessity, be a lower article supplied. On this point an East India merchant, who was a witness at the inquiry in Manchester, was most explicit. He said—

Mr. Hoyle

> "We find it difficult, and, indeed, often impossible, to raise prices. The general experience is that when exchange falls the Indian buyer reduces his sterling price to us here, and we have naturally to offer a lower price to our producer. If exchange falls, say, from 1s. 5d. to 1s. 4d., which is a fall of 6 per cent., the native buyer reduces his price to us accordingly, and it is needless to say that we cannot execute such an order. Possibly several telegrams pass between us, entailing expense, and the transaction may possibly be ultimately arranged by a pick or two picks being taken out of the cloth, or a narrower width being taken, or a yard or more being taken off the length; and at the same time the maker may have to cut into his profit, and the agent into his commission, all in order that an article may be supplied to come in at the current rupee price. Some shippers, less scrupulous than others, may stamp the goods the original length, though possibly a yard has been taken off them, and in this way false stamping has been encouraged."
>
> "You don't think it is the fall in Exchange that brings this about?—I have said that it is the fall in Exchange that creates the difficulty, and this is how the difficulty is frequently overcome."

Another way of cheapening cost is loading the yarn with size containing china, clay, and chemicals. Formerly it was considered that about 20 per cent. of size was sufficient to give strength to the yarn in weaving. One day, on my way to business, I was joined by a manufacturer, who complained bitterly of the unremunerative state of trade. I said to him—

> "You size heavily, I believe?—Oh, no, he said. We only put 100 per cent. on, and some of our neighbours put 200 per cent. on."

So that 100 lbs. of cotton yarn is loaded with 200 lbs of filling, which must fall off in the washtub, leaving the web as thin as paper and as easily torn. Heavy sizing compels the saturation of weaving factories with steam to soften the yarn and make it weave. The operatives complained that their health was being destroyed, and last year they had a Bill drafted in the hope that Parliament would remedy the evil. Eventually, a Conference was held in the Grand Committee Room to consider the draft Bill—a Conference consisting of seven Members of Parliament and equal numbers of representatives of the operatives and of the employers. In the discussion that took place the difficulties of the position on both sides were pointed out. One of the speakers on the part of the employers said the trade now was such that "a manufacturer could not live if he made honest cloth." The changed condition in which the trade is carried on will be seen if I read what a Manchester merchant said before the Manchester Chamber. He was asked—

> "If a Manchester merchant sells yarn in China for 500 dollars, and a Bombay merchant also sells yarn for 500 dollars, quantity and quality being equal in both cases, what loss does the Manchester merchant sustain in getting his money home?"

And the reply was "None."

> "Do you mean that the Manchester merchant will get the same money home as does the Bombay merchant?"—Assuming, without entering into calculations, that those 500 dollars return to the Lancashire merchant £75, whereas they formerly returned him £100, and that those £75 will purchase him as many commodities as £100 did formerly, he would lose nothing."

The question was put in another form and the witness answered in these words:—

> "Take the case of my own trade. I am a merchant carrying on business in Bombay and Manchester, and I am to-day doing the very business which you instance, because I am shipping yarns and cloth from Bombay to China and Japan, and also from Manchester to the same markets. In the latter case I get 25 per cent. less gold for the same quantity of yarn than I formerly did, say £75 instead of £100; but that lessened quantity of gold will buy me as many commodities as the £100 would in former days. At the same time, in Bombay I get back my money in rupees, say 1,000, the same number that I got in former days; but these rupees will only buy me the same commodities that they did in former days. Therefore the purchasing power of the two remittances is equal, for I get as much of all that I consume and require, as a merchant, for my appreciated gold—that is, for the smaller number of sovereigns at home—as I do in Bombay for the unaltered number of rupees. I consequently sustain no loss as a merchant on my remittance from China."

That evidence is lucidity itself—it is a volume in few words—the merchant, the middleman suffers no loss—it is passed on to the English producer. The Bombay manufacturer carries on his trade in circumstances analagous to those which prevailed in this country before 1873, but the English manufacturer is worse off by the loss of 25 per cent in exchange. Why does not the English manufacturer pass the loss on? Well, part of it was passed on. Coals and mill stores were cheaper. Cotton, too, was lower and wages were reduced. The last thing an employer likes to do is to reduce wages. Ill-feeling always follows the attempt. Some years ago Bolton, Blackburn, and other places in East Lancashire suffered from an embittered struggle on a reduction of wages. An excited mob broke into the house of Colonel Raynsford Jackson, who was the President of the Manufacturers' Association, and burned his house to the ground. In that struggle the operatives on strike, or locked out, lost in wages nearly £790,000 before the strike ended, and then they went in at the reduction. At no period during the last 15 years have reductions in cost of manufacture been equal to the fall in values of cotton goods, and now the lessened costs of manufacture have, in great part, passed away. Coals have risen, wages have risen, cotton is higher, because it can be and is consumed in other countries where exchange troubles do not exist. Another evil from the divergence between gold money and silver money is that the inception of business is transferred to foreign markets, and necessitates long contracts. A witness at the Royal Commission was asked—

> "Question 2283.—Is it the case that this fluctuation in exchange leads to bargains being made on contract for future delivery rather than to immediate transactions?—Yes, it has changed the whole nature of business.
>
> Question 2284.—And these contracts are fulfilled after a certain time, and during that time accidents may occur?—Yes, formerly the man who sent the goods abroad was really a merchant.
>
> Question 2285.—He is now simply a middleman?—He is now a middleman and tries to keep himself in that position."

Mr. Provand, M.P., describing before the Royal Commission the cost, the uncertainties, and risks of the new mode of doing business, said: "It makes it a speculative gambling business in fact." The long contracts for yarns and piece goods necessitated by the new system lead to gambling in raw cotton. Speculators can afford to pay, and do pay, well for early information. No sooner are contracts placed in Manchester than speculators put their hands on raw cotton; the shipping merchant may also buy cotton simultaneously with his purchases of yarns and goods; for him, with accurate knowledge of contracts placed, it is a safe speculation. So the spinner or manufacturer may find there are three buyers of raw cotton against one transaction in the manufactured article.

In that way "cotton corners" are made. Mr. Henry Lee, formerly M.P. for Southampton, and now President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, in his review of the trade of 1889 at the annual meeting of the Chamber in February of this year, said—

> "He believed the manufacturers of the present day were not obtaining what they had a right to expect from the capital they had invested. The wages paid were considerable, but the amount of profit arising from the investment of capital was not large. This was due to several causes. . . . There was gambling in shares, gambling in Stocks, gambling in cotton, gambling in almost everything that could be touched. He quite remembered the time, when he was young, when those things did not exist, and their forefathers would have been horrified at the spirit of speculation which prevailed at the present day."

These are only part of the evils to which this Motion calls the attention of the House. There is no country in the world where the cotton trade is carried on under such unfavourable economic conditions as exist in this country. In all other countries the investment of capital is encouraged. In this country such investment of capital is discouraged by the conflict of monetary laws in the same Empire. There is no other country where the returns for capital and labour employed in the cotton trade are so uncertain as they are in England. We are told we want Protection. What is the meaning of the word "Protection" when used in relation to trade and commerce? It means a tax laid on an article at the port of entry which shall make it difficult for foreigners to compete with home producers. Arbitrary and artificial interference with the sale of commodities affect prices far beyond what the actual amount of interference would seem to warrant. The article of foreign origin being taxed at the port of entry home producers get higher prices, not only by the amount of the tax, but also from the lessened supply. The whole community gives up part of its earnings to increase the income of a section. That is Protection. What is happening to the cotton trade at this moment? Take the case of sales in China of Indian goods for 500 dollars, and of English goods for a like sum, as published in the Manchester evidence. China is a neutral market—open to all on equal terms, and the China merchant has paid equal amounts. The Bombay man gets his money home in full weight and count, but the Manchester man loses 25 per cent. by exchange. Where has the loss gone to? Who has got it? Part of it has been paid to the banker for the risk he has taken in fixing exchange forward. Mr. Provand, M.P., told the Royal Commissioners the bankers' charges on China business were equal to a rate of 12 per cent. per annum for the use of the money, and he had known it to be equal to interest at the rate of 15 and 20 per cent. per annum; but even then the risks and losses were so great that bankers derived only small profits from that class of business. Part of the loss goes in those commissions to bankers, and the remainder of the loss goes in the fall of produce. Falling exchange works both ways—in lowering the price of exports and in lowering the price of imports. Produce to pay for our exports is sold here, and consumed by the whole community. The manufacturer has had 25 per cent. knocked off the value of his goods, and the community has got it. Operatives and their employers have done the work, and the community has got 25 per cent. of their wages. If that had been done of set purpose, we should have given it a hard name. But it is an accident. It came out of the Franco-German War. Not one of the actors on either side of that great war had the remotest idea of what was coming. The last thing they intended was to cripple the industries of the world, but grievously crippled they have been. In saying that one portion of the community—and that the toiling portion of the community—ought not to be robbed of the fruits of their toil, are we Protectionists? Producers are the victims of monetary vivisection. But it is said we are a creditor country. What made us so? The ancient Britons were not creditors of anybody; then, how have we become a creditor country? The inventive faculty possessed by the people of this country, the adaptation of machinery to the varied industries, has so multiplied the power of the individual to produce as to give us the position we hold as the first commercial nation in the world. Improvements in machinery have enabled the same, or a fewer, number of workers to produce more goods of a better quality and at a smaller cost. At the same time, the hours of labour have been lessened, and higher wages earned for fewer hours. That seems strange, and yet it is true. The eight hours' day will come that way, to the advantage of both masters and men. A striking illustration of this great gain took place in the woollen trade. When wool combing was done by hand it was laborious to the workers and injurious to the fibre of the wool; but now, by the aid of the combing machine, invented by Mr. Isaac Holden, M.P., 20 persons can produce more and better combed wool than 2,000 persons could do before. The world has gained more by that invention than if Mr. Holden had discovered a gold mine. Every day's working of a gold mine brings the mine nearer to exhaustion, but every day's working of new inventions of machinery educates the workers and stimulates the mind, which is the mainspring of all production, and so every mechanical invention becomes the parent of others. The inventive faculty in our people is practically without limit. We owe it to Watt, Arkwright, Hargreaves, Kay, Stephenson, Faraday, Wheatstone, Brunel, Bessemer, Holden, and their coadjutors and successors that we are a creditor nation. These men took the forces of Nature and turned them into beneficent activity for the use of man. The power of this country to produce was never greater than now. That power is growing, and, with technical education in all our towns and villages, will grow. We are a nation of producers. Our power to produce is practically unlimited, but the power of each individual to consume is limited by Nature herself. The improvements in shipbuilding and in the management of ships continually lessen the cost of transport, so that distance from the supply of raw material is of less and less consequence. What we want, above all things, is the free interchange of services with other nations. If we permit impediments to the exchange of services to grow up we shall kill the bird that lays the golden eggs. The world is waiting for what we can supply in such abundance. You may cover China with railways and build iron bridges over her rivers. You may supply a network of iron roads over India. The natural wealth of those countries, released by those appliances, will pay you back in full measure, and almost without stint. It would be hard to say whether they or we would reap most benefit from the exchange of products. Just and equitable means of exchange would enable us to render service to each other. The House was greatly interested yesterday in listening to the Budget speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Budget for a year of returning prosperity. I hold in my hand a letter from a leader of a Trades Union. The writer is a man of high character; he has received distinguished marks of confidence from successive Governments. And this is what he writes to me in respect to workpeople in the cotton trade in the generally prosperous year of 1889. After careful inquiry by himself and his colleagues, he says—

> "They find that owing to stoppages of machinery and irregularity of employment in the cotton trade last year the operatives lost in wages alone £265,000."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has the administration of a national estate which has no equal in any other country; but give the Chancellor of the Exchequer fair-play. Give agriculture, give iron and steel, and all the industries into which they enter, fair-play; and then the producers of this country could pay off the National Debt without feeling it. What does the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Flint propose? Simply this—to follow up the work of the Royal Commission by taking part in a Conference of the nations of the world. That is all. The last words of the Motion govern the whole. The Conference would consider whether bi-metallism can be re-established in the interest of all the nations concerned. There can surely be no danger of peril to English interests in such a Conference. The Conference would come at an opportune time. The world is awakening to the importance of a good understanding between nations. The recent Conference held at Berlin was described by Cardinal Manning, who can look back on 80 years of an eventful life, as one of the greatest events of our time. Whatever may ultimately come out of the deliberations of that Conference, it must surely be regarded as an acknowledgment that no nation is so self-contained, so self-sufficient as to have no need of other nations. The summoning of the Berlin Conference is an acknowledgment of the truth that we are all members one of another. It is but 40 years since the Prince Consort of England suggested the holding of a Great Exhibition in Hyde Park to which all nations were invited to send their best industrial products; and now the German Emperor, the grandson of the Prince Consort, invites the great Powers of Europe to join him in trying to improve the condition of those whose lot is that of manual labour. It may well be that the Emperor sees that the policy of "blood and iron" has had its day, and that there are surer ways to national weal than by breechloading guns and magazine rifles. For many years a dark cloud has hung over Continental Europe threatening to burst in war of unprecedented magnitude. The Emperor of Germany, by means of the Berlin Conference, may have set forces in motion which shall disperse that dark cloud and bring us nearer to the time when military burdens shall cease to weigh upon and oppress peaceful industry. The hon. Member for Flint invites the House to assent to the holding of a still greater Conference—a Conference of the chief commercial nations of the world—to consider whether it is possible to devise means whereby all nations may exchange the products of labour without waste and loss. The saving of waste leaves a large margin for profit. Naval engineers and telegraphists have brought nations ever closer and closer together. May not the best minds of every nation, meeting in Council, complete the work by insuring that people everywhere shall gather and enjoy the fruits of their own industry? It would be a Peace Congress of the greatest magnitude, and if successful its beneficial results to all countries would make for "Peace on earth and goodwill among men."

*(9.52.) SIR LYON PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): Before I proceed to deal with the Resolution proposed by the hon. Member for Flint, I should like to show how shorn and bald it is compared with that Tabled last year by the Minister for Agriculture. The original form of his Resolution gave much condensed instruction to the House, and was bold as to its assertions. It began by saying that the recent divergence in the price of the precious metals

> "Is prejudicial in the highest degree to the finances and the Government of India, and is detrimental to our trade with the silver-using countries."

It then suggested that the recent and prolonged depression of trade and agriculture, and the irregularity of employment "for vast numbers of the population," was largely owing to the changes in the value of gold and silver. In the speeches which followed the Resolution we were told that the prices of commodities were lowered and that the wages of the people were reduced. That redundant Resolution and the commentaries upon it left the House in no doubt of the views of the bi-metallists. Though that was the character of the Resolution Tabled by the Minister of Agriculture in its passage from the Table to the Chair, some experienced Parliamentary hand seems to have pruned it of all its reasons, and left it in that mild and unassertive form in which it is again offered to-day. The present Resolution assumes that "evils" still exist, though it is not stated what they are. Trade has improved, and the prices of commodities have risen considerably, in spite of the alleged scarcity of gold and the disuse of a silver standard abroad. The chief depression which still exists is in agriculture. The reason is that farmers still keep to the domestic character of their production. All other industries have reorganised their methods in the last 20 years in order to adapt themselves to the changed conditions of production and distribution. Last year the Resolution declared that the divergence in prices of gold and silver was highly detrimental to India. There was some support for that statement in an almost despairing Despatch from the Governor General in September, 1886. The cry of despair was taken up by the Minister of Agriculture, who said—

> "India is suffering most severely from the present state of things; and if there be any further fall in the price of silver, which is certain to occur unless effectual steps are taken to arrest it, India will be brought to the verge of ruin and bankruptcy."

That Cassandra prophecy of woe was given in December, 1888. The divergence in prices still exist, but these wails of despair were changed into a song of triumph by the Finance Minister of India, Mr. Steel, in a Report made to the Government in 1889, in which he said—

> "We have reason to look forward with hope to the future of agriculture, the great stand-by of the Empire; it is flourishing as it never flourished before. The manufacturing interests are prospering and developing to the great benefit of the country. Trade is growing in magnitude; communications are being rapidly improved. Our debt, though large, is amply covered by the value of State property."

Imports from and exports to India have largely increased since 1873 and to a less extent in other silver countries, and are especially large in the Argentine Republic. It was prophesied that on account of the difficulties of exchange no more capital would be sent to India for improvements. As a fact, we increased our loans to that country by £15,000,000 between 1880 and 1888. To-night the Movers of the Resolution have abandoned their old selected battle-field of India and have chiefly referred to the influence of the changed currency on Lancashire, especially as recent Returns show a falling off in the exports of cotton goods to the East, although that is coincident with a rise, not a fall, in the price of silver. Sudden fluctuations in exchange are, no doubt, harassing to all commerce, but a persistent low rate of exchange can always be provided for by any merchant of experience. He buys goods at gold prices, and knows exactly the exchange value of the silver which he gets by the sale of his goods. But I am not surprised at the working man—I will not say being deluded, because I believe in the utmost sincerity of the bi-metallists and their views on these questions—but I am not surprised that the working man hearing the arguments of the Bi-metallist Association, and having them over and over again, comes to believe that this state of low wages and want of employment during the time of depression arises from these causes. They saw that mills were rising in India. What has led to cotton spinning in India? It has been conclusively proved that the value of the rupee has not fallen in India. It is the possession by that country of cotton—the raw material of the industry—and the cheap labour of the workers which fully accounts for India entering into competition with Lancashire goods. It is in the highest degree doubtful whether the divergence of gold and silver in Europe has anything to do with manufactures in the East. Those who oppose bi-metallism deny that trade depends upon metallic currency. Trade rests upon barter, and anything which profoundly alters production and distribution of commodities necessarily acts upon it. Soon after 1873, there was a great development of railways in the United States and India. At that time also the Suez Canal worked a transformation in commerce. It gave an enormous impulse to steam navigation, especially when duplex engines were introduced, and large existing fleets, both of sail and steam, were swept away as antiquated. Trade had to adapt itself to new routes and conditions of traffic. While commerce was being transformed, production in manufactures was vastly increased, and it became larger than the consumption. It took time for the world to adapt itself to the changed conditions, and that period was marked by depression of trade. I cannot say what are the cardinal doctrines of faith of bi-metallists at the present time, but I know that up to a recent period one of them was that the scarcity of gold has produced its appreciation, in consequence of which the prices of commodities fell. I admit that this view has received a considerable amount both of direct and indirect support from the unfortunate manner in which the Royal Commission reported. Undoubtedly, in recent years, various States have increased their gold coinage and lessened that of silver. Where has been the sign of scarcity of gold? Silver has been displaced, but gold has flowed in with perfect ease to supply it. The stoppage of the legal ratio by the Latin Union in 1873 did not demonetise silver; it simply altered the distribution of silver coins. Between 1876 and 1880 the silver coined reached the enormous total of £129,500,000, about 40 per cent. higher than when the legal ratio was kept up by the Latin Union. To speak of the "consequent demonetisation of silver" in the face of such increasing silver coinage is an absurdity. When the main argument for bi-metallism is the scarcity and consequent appreciation of gold, surely we may call upon its advocates to tell us what they mean by scarcity, and to give us proofs that it exists. Scarcity in commodities such as grain or cotton means that there is an insufficient quantity for consumption. But gold, though it wastes a little by use, does not disappear in consumption; it only circulates. When does gold become so scarce as to appreciate in value and lower the prices of commodities? On the other hand, under what conditions does it become so abundant as to depreciate in value and to raise the prices of commodities? There must be some happy medium between abundance and scarcity when it neither lowers nor raises prices. These are fundamental questions which ought to be answered by those who seek to alter our monetary system. There are definitions in abundance as to the amount of money which a man ought to possess. Locke and Petty put it as one-fiftieth or fifty-second part of the annual wages or half the annual rent of land. I do not desire to fix upon the bi-metallists either of these definitions, for times have changed; but I cannot argue on scarcity or abundance of gold without some proof or explanation of what the terms mean. I admit that business is done with a much smaller quantity of gold than was deemed necessary 20 years ago. Other nations are now imitating our banking system, and the transference of coin from hand to hand is greatly economised by instruments of credit. The liabilities of our banks to the public amount to £621,000,000, or nearly the figure of the National Debt; but the amount of coin or bullion to meet this liability is only about £35,000,000, or, if we deduct from each side of the account the £8,000,000 locked up in the Notes Department of the Bank of England, it is £27,000,000, or only 4½ per cent. of the liabilities. What would have been scarcity 20 years ago would be perplexing abundance now. The last stronghold of the bi-metallists is that France for 70 years, aided by the Latin Union for eight of those years, maintained a fixed ratio of gold and silver at 1 to 15½. There was no inherent virtue in that ratio. When it was established in the ninth year of the Revolution, that happened to be the market price of silver. To propose to rehabilitate it now when the ratio is as 1 to 20, is a very serious proposal. But it is not true that France coined gold and silver indifferently at 1 to 15½ during 70 years, that is, from 1803 to 1873. The market prices showed constant variations from ½ to 3 per cent., and sometimes much more. Free coinage, which was the essence of a bi-metallic system, became impossible under these fluctuations, and for 50 out of the 70 years it did not exist except to a limited extent. When gold was cheap gold coinage was encouraged; when silver was cheap that was coined chiefly. Thus, from 1821 to 1850, or for 30 years, silver was 2 per cent. cheaper than gold, and France coined 87½ per cent. of silver and only 12½ of gold. In the next 20 years ending 1870, gold fell under the legal value, and the Mints of France, and later of the Latin Union, only coined 10 per cent. of silver, while they coined 90 per cent. of gold. So that during 30 years France was practically mono-metallic on the basis of silver, with gold at a premium; and in the next 20 years she was practically still mono-metallic, but on the basis of gold. In fact, though France was bi-metallic in law, she was practically mono-metallic in practice for at least 50 out of the 70 years. During the 50 years when the coinage was practically mono-metallic, a far more powerful law than the Bi-metallic Law came into operation. This was the Gresham Law, by which the metal, over-rated on the ratio, forced the dear metal out of the market. It was this law, and not German silver, which broke down the Latin Union when silver became abundant and fell in price. Silver having become cheaper, the Gresham Law forced it into coinage. A legal ratio is only possible on two conditions (1) that the Mints are the dominant buyers and use most of the annual product in coinage; and (2) when that product is moderate in quantity. The legal ratio broke down because the artifice by which France held it up could no longer bear the strain. But silver was coined in much greater quantity than at any previous period. The increase of silver coin was 54 per cent. greater in the five years ending 1875 than in the preceding five years. What Germany did was to call in her miscellaneous coin and issue uniform coins of gold and silver. The silver in the Bank reserves and that hoarded by the Government was thrown on the market, and, no doubt, influenced the prices on a falling market. From 1873 to 1879 Germany sold silver to the amount of £28,357,000, or an average of £4,000,000 annually.

It was soon absorbed by the coining nations, which required, and did coin annually more than double the amount of silver thrown by Germany on the market. The production of both gold and silver since 1873 has been greater than at any period of the world's history. Before the Californian discoveries, the annual mean product of gold never exceeded 20,000 kilogrammes; now it is eight times as much, or 160,000. Silver has not increased in the same proportion. The mean annual product of silver for the 70 years when the legal ratio prevailed was 838,000 kilogrammes, but the mean annual product since that date has been above 2,500,000, and is now about 3,000,000. Formerly the Mints coined nearly all the gold produced, and when the goldsmith wanted it for his art he melted down sovereigns. But now the supply of gold is far in excess of the demands for coinage, which steadily decrease. In the decade ending 1860 gold was cheap, so the Gresham Law forced 81 per cent. of the annual product into the coinage of the world. In the next decade ending 1870 gold was becoming dearer, and only 54 per cent. of the product was coined. In the decade ending 1880, 45 per cent. was used for coinage, and in the last five years of Soetbeer's Tables, ending 1885, only 23 per cent. was used for coin. At least 75 per cent. of the annual product of gold is no longer used for coin. How is it that gold has kept up its value and that silver has fallen? The reason is obvious. There is a demand for gold outside that of the Mints, for industrial purposes, for bullion, and hoarding, which takes 75 per cent. of the produce. About 60 per cent. seems to be used in the Arts. Silver, on the other hand, is chiefly valuable for coinage, industrial uses scarcely amounting to 27 per cent. of the product. Unfortunately, its use in Arts is not extending. Though the Mints are the chief purchasers of silver and the smallest purchasers of gold, they are quite unable to keep up the price of silver. The Mints of the United States, of France, and of India, have laboured to keep up the price by enormous coinage, but hitherto they have failed. The sum of our knowledge of the commissions of different nations is, that though gold has largely increased since 1850 in annual product, the demand for purposes other than coinage, industry, bullion, and hoarding—has been so great as to keep up its price. Silver, on the other hand, though its product has also increased and though the demand for coinage up to 1880 often exceeded the annual product, has been in such small demand for industrial purposes that its price has fallen. One of the chief reasons for this seems to be that in a busy country of large commerce silver is too bulky and heavy for use as a coin in important transactions. Silver, as a fractional coin and of token value, is indispensable. The French and United States coins, with their legal ratio, are not full weighted. What has happened in America even with light silver dollars worth only 75 cents? In 11 years the United States has coined no less than 300,000,000 ounces of silver, and has now in the Treasury 335,500,000 dollars and fractional coin worth £69,000,000. In spite of this enormous coinage silver has fallen 20 per cent. in that period. The silver coin is stored away in vaults and cellars and is of no use to any human being. The silver thus locked up will remain a useless accumulation, at least until the country reduces itself to a mono-metallic silver standard. You might as well have the cellars filled with Holloway's Pills, or Pear's Soap, as with the silver. The silver coin in actual circulation is little more than one dollar per head of the population, though 290,000,000 dollars are represented in paper certificates. Past experience has shown that no legislative union of gold and silver will persuade merchants to fill their pockets with silver in small transactions, or to receive it in cartloads or shiploads in large dealings. The legal ratio in America is one ounce of gold to 16 ounces of silver. If you want to use it as coin you must have 16 times more strength to handle it, 16 times more transport to carry it, and 16 times more space to hold it. So that you have a misapplication of 16-17ths of human effort in using silver instead of gold for the purposes of commerce. The hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) and the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir W. Houldsworth) contend that the legal union of silver and gold will add more strength to the currency. It was quite true that if you yoke a carthorse to a racehorse the strength of both would be increased. But the speed of the racer would be sacrificed. Gold is more easily handled and transported, and does its work with more celerity. To ask civilised countries with large commerce to go back to a bulky and heavy standard like silver, or to couple gold and silver together is, in fact, like asking nations to give up railways and go back to stage-coaches as a means of locomotion. The bi-metallists seem desirous to restrict trade as Lycurgus did when he forced the Lacedæmonians to use iron as money in order that its weight might deter them from over-much trading. Each country adopts the money best fitted for its own work. Silver is not so well suited as copper for the uncivilised parts of Africa, for semi-civilised nations it is better adapted than gold for the standard. Before 1816 England, like other civilised nations, found the double standard of silver and gold well adapted for its transactions. In 1873 many nations preferred, like England, to adopt the single gold standard. What was it that converted 309,000,000 bi-metallists to become mono-metallists? It was the simple fact that the supply of silver became greater than the demand for it as a circulating medium. When these nations used both gold and silver in the ratio of value of 1 to 15½, the ratio of the annual product of the two metals was only as 1 to 7, but now it is as 1 to 19. In America it is 1 to 20 or 1 to 30. If the power of Statute Law could override the laws of supply and demand and give a legal value to two metals, it would be more simple to fix a ratio of equality and say that one ounce of silver should have the same value as one ounce of gold. The hon. Member for Flintshire admits the logic of the position. He says that Statute Law could create and uphold equal values between the two metals, but that he prefers the ratio of 1 to 15½ because of old experience. I wonder that it did not occur to my hon. Friend that Statute Law is powerless to control laws of nature. Locke, in his famous essay on currency, put this very clearly—

> "You will as fruitlessly endeavour to keep two different things at the same price one with another, as you could keep two things in equilibrium when their varying weights depend on different causes."

The hon. Member for Flint has quoted several benevolent passages from remarks made by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer in relation to a silver currency, but there is one passage he has not quoted. At the Conference of 1878 our present Chancellor of the Exchequer was the delegate of England, and in his final speech on that occasion said—

> "As for the desire that has been expressed that a fixed ratio may be established between gold and silver and an International value be given to them, I declare that in my view it is impossible to realise this, impossible to maintain it in theory, and that it is contrary to the principles of science."

The bi-metallists wholly disagree with Locke and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the physical impossibility of keeping up a fixed ratio, for they contend that what is impossible for a single nation is quite possible for a combination of nations. What does this admission amount to? It is giving up bi-metallism as a principle, and relying upon it as a Trust Syndicate. No doubt such an International Syndicate would raise the price of silver up to a certain period, and would greatly stimulate its production. What has happened in the recent copper ring would certainly happen in a new silver ring. The bi-metallists desire a Conference. What can a Conference do in regard to supply and demand? Suppose all nations agreed to dress their soldiers and reserves in red coats and blue trousers and to establish a bi-colour ratio between the red dye stuff of madder and the blue of indigo. No doubt the price of both would rise, and France, Turkey, and Holland would again open up vast areas to the production of madder, and India would open new vats for indigo. How long would the price last at a fixed rate, especially as there is an outside demand of 24 civilians for each soldier? I can understand why America should advocate a bi-metallic league; but I am inclined to agree with a quiet writer like Jevons even when he remarks—

> "Does it not seem outrageous folly for England to create a factitious demand for silver in order to keep up the profits of the Nevada Mines?"

The chief commercial nations of the world are to be called together to consider whether a bi-metallic system can be established in their common interests. England, the great creditor nation of the world, is to invite the debtor nations to confer with her as to whether the debts contracted in gold since 1816 may be repaid in depreciated silver, which the experience of centuries shows is the metal most liable to fluctuations in price, and which is certainly a worse medium of exchange and probably a worse standard of value. Of course, with a legal tender of an overrated metal silver would displace gold in our currency. No doubt the other nations will willingly, nay joyously, invite this country to walk into their parlour and receive the innocent fly. Practically the proposal is to widen the Latin Union, by including in it England, Germany, the American States, and perhaps India. Certainly there is novelty in the idea. The Latin Union was quite powerless to uphold the conventional ratio; but an enlarged Latin Union, containing England, which is *facile princeps* the great creditor nation, would, I admit, be much more stable. How long would this stability last? Just as long as England remained in the Union as a meek sheep to be shorn of her wool by the debtor nations. Modern bi-metallists are like the ancient alchemists, only that they are upside down. Our former Monarchs used to keep alchemists in their households to transmute silver into gold; but now our bi-metallic alchemists are striving to convert English gold into foreign silver—the nobler into the baser metal. I am sure it is in the interest of England to adhere to her monetary system in perfect independence of other nations. Bi-metallism is a theory which the Royal Commission could not agree to recommend. The hon. Members who move the Resolution express their satisfaction with some of the admissions of that Commission. Why do they not attach importance to the final conclusion of Lord Herschell and his co-signatories, when they say—

> "The change proposed is tremendous, and we cannot but feel that, to a great extent, it would be a leap in the dark?"

*(10.45.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I wish, Mr. Speaker, that the right hon. Member for Derby, who spoke earlier in the evening, had heard the interesting speech just delivered on the same side of the question as that on which he delivered himself, for I think he would have admitted that if there are philosophers who advocate the bi-metallic heresy the philosophers are not all on one side. Now, Mr. Speaker, my heresy on this question is of rather ancient date. I believe that many Gentlemen on this side of the House have been converted to what is called, not very happily, I think, bi-metallism, by the economic evils which they think, and in my opinion justly think, have flowed from the rupture of the bi-metallic par of 1873, and it was not until the economic consequences of that great currency change had been brought home to them, in the shape of commercial and agricultural depression, that they became converts to the view that a bi-metallic currency is the best currency which the world as a whole can adopt. That, at all events, is not my case. From a time when I had more opportunity than now of studying economic theories I became a convert to that opinion, which is not the opinion of a small minority of lunatics, as some persons vainly imagine, but is one held by the great majority of experts in France, in Germany, and in America; and I hold that opinion on broad grounds which have been strengthened, but not created by any experience which we have had since 1874. I admit that to attribute all the economic evils under which this country has been suffering for the last 15 years to the divergence between the currency value of gold and silver is not only erroneous in itself, but is in contradiction of the most ordinary economic knowledge, which shows us that for every great economic change a very large number of diverse, separate, and independent forces are responsible. But because that divergence in value is not wholly or, perhaps, even chiefly responsible for the great disasters that have occurred, that is no reason why we should not remedy, as far as we can, by an improvement of our currency system, the disasters for which that system has been responsible, and why we should not adopt a currency calculated in the future to give us a stability that, unfortunately, has not existed in the civilised world during the last 15 or 16 years. Now, there are three entirely distinct and separate kinds of evils which, I think, may be shown to have followed from the existing currency system. The first evil, and, I think, in some respects the least evil,

though it is one that is especially felt in Lancashire, is that which results from the admittedly temporary circumstance that a bonus has been given to Indian exports by the process of the fall of silver. The right hon. Member for Derby told us that, though this was an admitted evil for Lancashire, it was an unmixed benefit to India. I will come to that point directly, but let me point out, with regard to Indian manufactures, that we cannot regard any temporary stimulation of its export trade as an unmixed benefit. One of the great evils of any bounty system—and this by the hypothesis is a bounty system—is that it is, or may be, temporary in its effects. It stimulates trade, but when it ceases there is nothing to support the accumulation of labour and capital in an industry predestined, from natural and permanent causes, to ruin, or comparative ruin, at no distant date; yet while the benefit conferred upon India, the country in which the bounty is given, may be temporary, the injury done to England, the country against which the bounty is directed, may produce evils of the most serious kind. Because, notice this—the evils arising from a diversion of trade from one channel to another by artificial means, are not to be measured by a simple consideration of the loss or gain to the community from having to purchase a dearer or a cheaper article. A great injury to the community arises from this fact—that when an industry moves, the instruments of production either do not move at all, or move with very unequal facility. You may easily transfer floating capital to a more profitable industry; but that part of capital which is embodied in machinery and buildings you cannot move at all, while labour moves only with the greatest difficulty, and at a great cost of inconvenience and suffering. The Lancashire labourers who suffer from this temporary bounty given to the Indian labourers cannot transfer their industry to a new market, while the Indian labourers will in their turn suffer when the artificial bounty produced by the divergence between gold and silver comes to an end. Now I go to the second effect produced by our present system, which is the uncertainty of exchange. Now, the uncertainty of exchange is a wholly different evil from those to which I have just referred. It would exist equally though silver were appreciated instead of depreciated, and would produce consequences probably not less disastrous. The right hon. Member for Derby, who cannot pursue his consideration even of a currency question without calling into play his great controversial talents, even though his friends and not his enemies are his victims, chose to use the most violent language against the Indian Administration who were his colleagues in 1886 when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he told us, in words which unfortunately I did not take down—and I cannot from my own resources successfully imitate them—that they bitterly complained of the extension of Indian manufactures and productions. Now, I assert with confidence that no Indian Government ever complained of that; what they complained of was that the whole of Indian finance was thrown into disorder by the uncertainty in the exchanges, and that the result of the disorder in Indian finance was suffering to the Indian taxpayer. I might refer here to the embarrassment caused in International transactions between gold and silver-using countries by this uncertainty; but the matter has been so well put by my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, that I will at once pass on to the third evil arising from the divergence of value between the two currencies, which is, in my opinion, the most important of all. What the world requires is a permanent and a stable currency. Money is a measure of value, and it performs not only the function of measuring the value of the transactions from day to day, but it acts as what has been called a standard of deferred payments; and unless your standard of deferred payments is in itself a stable standard you necessarily inflict a great hardship either upon the creditors or upon the debtors in a community. Some have argued as if those who are in favour of bi-metallism desire a currency inflation. I do not desire a currency inflation; though, no doubt, if we must suffer either from inflation or from contraction, then I say let us suffer from inflation. What I desire is, that we should do our best to find a currency which will be neither subject to serious inflation nor to serious contraction; and I cannot conceive how anyone who has studied this question can doubt that a currency formed of two metals would be less liable to the violent changes of value that the existing mono-metallic currencies. The right hon. Gentleman asked us to define in what consists the scarcity of gold? The scarcity of gold, or of any currency, exists wherever the standard of deferred payment seriously alters its value in an upward direction. It can be shown, as I believe, that where a bi-metallic currency exists such scarcity is less likely to occur. To those who think it unlikely to occur under our present system I should like to ask whether they think the tendencies of commerce are in the direction of depreciation or appreciation? I admit, so far as you invent new banking facilities and new methods of economising the precious metals in their work as coins, so far you mitigate the inconvenience which must ensue from the increase of population, the increase of production, the increase of commerce, and the increased amount of work which you throw upon your currency. But do you expect that, in the long run, these banking facilities will keep pace with the increased amount of labour which you are deliberately throwing upon the gold standard? We have heard a great deal to-night, and have seen a great deal in the Press, to the effect that the fall in prices is owing, not to the scarcity of gold, but to the increase of commodities. I am not sure that the distinction is not entirely fallacious. So long as the work a given amount of money has to do *increases* (it matters not from what cause), so long will you suffer from the evils of an appreciating currency. Do not mono-metallists regard with apprehension the effect of reversing the legislation of silver-using countries? If America to-morrow were to decide that it would have no more to do with silver, but would work its whole commercial system on a gold basis, where would prices be? Do you seriously think that a gross injustice would not be done to the debtor, that grave injury would not be inflicted upon commerce, and a serious difficulty be thrown upon the Government of India? In the absence of international agreement you are not only perfectly helpless to prevent changes of that kind, but you would not have the slightest ground of complaint against the Government which caused all the inconvenience. The conclusion that I draw from this very brief analysis of the evils and advantages, relatively of the bi-metallic and the mono-metallic systems is that if you can establish a bi-metallic system you should do so. For the House will, I think, grant this: that if you had a bi-metallic system you would get rid, in the first place, of the artificial bounty which everybody admits to be an evil in International transactions. In the second place, you would get rid of the uncertainty of exchange, which is admitted even by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby to be a great impediment to manufacture and trade; and though I do not say you would get rid altogether of the oscillations and variations in your standard of payment, you would greatly diminish them, while you would entirely remove the evils which have arisen in the past, and must arise in the future, I fear, from the independent action of countries with regard to the currency they choose to employ. We have only, therefore, to consider whether a bi-metallic ratio is possible or not. The first observation I have to make on that point is that the problem has been solved by experience. The thing has been done. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman himself will attempt to deny that it has been done, and that the relatively small commercial community of France, Belgium, and Italy were able by their united action to give us all the benefits of a stable exchange which we were too dull or too lazy to obtain for ourselves The right hon. Member for Derby, who, I observe, has just come in, asked why, if it was so advantageous, did the Latin Union give it up? Well, the Latin Union gave it up for reasons perfectly consistent with the bi-metallic theory. Nobody denies that there is a point after which a bi-metallic country will be denuded of the more expensive metal. The smaller the bi-metallic area the more easily that point is reached. The action of Germany in 1873 did undoubtedly throw, in the opinion of French statesmen—I do not say whether they were right or wrong—a burden on the bi-metallic machinery of the Latin Union more than it could bear. That has never been denied by any bi-metallist. On the contrary, it is what some bi-metallists prophesied would occur under such circumstances. But is that any solid argument against introducing a state of things in which there will be no country like Germany outside the Union, and in which the bi-metallic area, instead of being confined to France, Belgium, and Italy, would embrace practically the whole commercial community of the world? Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby drew a hypothetical picture of what the world would be like if the bi-metallic dream, as he would call it, were to become a reality, and if some great political catastrophe like the Franco-German War were to occur, and an important country like Germany were to withdraw from the Union. The picture does not alarm me. What motive would Germany—taking that country for the purpose of illustration—have for withdrawing? The right hon. Gentleman says, "In order to get gold." He says that gold would naturally flow to the country where most could be got for it; that if gold was unduly depreciated in the Union, the country that left the Union might get it; and on that basis he founds the theory that Germany, desiring to get gold quickly, would be tempted to leave the Union. But that would only happen if the ratio between the two metals were disturbed. If you have a sufficiently large area, if, as the minority on the Commission proposed, you embrace practically the civilised world in your bi-metallic area, the action of one country in leaving the Union could not disturb the ratio. And since it is only through a disturbance of the ratio that it would attract gold, it could not have any motive for leaving the Bi-metallic Union. Let me also point out, in the second place, that a country which is just going to war does not take that opportunity of entering into a currency operation which certainly would not have a quieting effect upon its Money Market; and, in the third place, let me point out that the effect of the adoption of the system must necessarily be a slow effect. It would not be like raising the bank rate, which brings in gold at once into the Bank of England. Gold would only come in by a slow percolation of appreciated metal from the bi-metallic countries. The third objection, and possibly the most important, depends upon the theory that legislation cannot fix the ratio between any two metals for currency purposes. Now, I do not think that a question like this can be argued fitly in an Assembly of this kind; but let me point out two or three facts which bear on it. My right hon. Friend the leader of the House read some very interesting extracts from the Debates which occurred in this House in 1830, from which it appears that the universal opinion of competent authorities—among them Sir Robert Peel and Lord Althorp—then was that to endeavour to fix a ratio between the two metals was to run counter to the inevitable laws of nature. But since that date a complete revolution has taken place in the way in which, in this country at least, economists look at this question. I do not believe that you will find a theoretical teacher or professor of position under 50 years of age in America, Germany, France, Italy, or England who is prepared to stake his reputation on the theory that you cannot fix a bi-metallic ratio. As many who have devoted themselves to the theoretical consideration of this question know, the view of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby is antiquated. I state that with some confidence, for I observe always that the right hon. Gentleman is a Tory in the wrong place. Consider the Report of the Commission. It will not be asserted that that Commission was composed of persons of very radical tendencies on currency questions. In fact, a large number of them were deeply imbued with and attached to the doctrines prevalent in England 30 years ago; yet every one of those gentlemen, differing as they did upon many points, was on this most important issue convinced by the force of logic and argument of the fact that there is no inherent difficulty in establishing a fixed ratio between the two metals.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: Two Members of the Commission expressed a diametrically opposite view.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course, I accept any statement made by the right hon. Gentleman. I am quite aware that two Members, the right hon. Gentleman being one of them, signed a minority Report; but I do not understand that they deliberately traversed the statement that a ratio could be established between the two metals. If it be possible, as I believe almost every economist of repute holds it to be possible, to fix, by international arrangement this ratio between the two metals, is it not preposterous that a question of such supreme international importance should be left wholly to the separate action of different nations? Postal questions and labour questions we can settle internationally, but currency questions, it appears, we cannot so settle. Though we were told by the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last that commerce was an international affair, the currency which is so intimately connected with commerce appears not to be an international affair. It seems to me to be of all international affairs the most international, the one that most deserves to be treated by common arrangement among nations. I, of course, admit that there may be difficulties in establishing this system; but I think those difficulties have been exaggerated. When I reflect that great nations have gone from inconvertible currency to convertible currency, from depreciated to undepreciated currency, from silver, to gold, and from gold to silver without those colossal disturbances and those serious diversions of trade which the right hon. Gentleman anticipates, I cannot help thinking that possibly those who, like my right hon. Friends the leader of the House and the Member for Derby, anticipate commercial disaster, not from the system, but from the process of its establishment, exaggerate the danger they fear. I frankly admit that I have not sufficient acquaintance with financial details to give to the House an opinion on the subject which is worth very much; but I have noticed in looking over the commercial history of the world that in almost every question the practical men ultimately come round to the side of the theoretical men. I am prepared, like the right hon. Gentleman, to appeal to the early experience of the century. He is as well aware as I am that the Directors of the Bank of England of that day and the commercial classes whom they represented were vehemently opposed to the resumption of specie payments, and anticipated the most serious commercial consequences from the reversion to the gold standard in England. Those anticipations were combated by theoretical men like Ricardo and others, and they proved to be unfounded. I am far from saying or thinking that the opinions of the great practical financiers and bankers of this country are to be despised—far from it. I know that nothing can be done, and I would suggest that nothing should be attempted which is against their views and wishes. I think it is from a discussion such as this that those who are engaged in the practical financial operations of London and other centres may see what dangers they run or may run from allowing every nation independently to settle, not for itself, but for the world, the currency that is to be adopted—from allowing Germany to decide whether the Indian Government shall or shall not have a tax on Indian rice; from allowing America to decide whether or not debts shall be paid at a rate which is equivalent to putting 25 per cent. additional burden on the debtor—and they will come round to the view that in the face of the rapidly-growing commerce of the world, in the face of the increasingly international character of the commercial transactions, it is desirable that some international arrangement should be arrived at which would not only have the effect of entirely preventing these daily oscillations between silver-using countries and gold-using countries which now perplex merchants and manufacturers, but will also have the effect of giving a more stable index of the measure of the permanent indebtedness of the world than they can ever hope to have under the mono-metallic standard. I trust the House will understand that. I adhere now as always to the view that the bi-metallic standard is the best; at the same time, I feel bound to give additional emphasis to what I have already stated, that it would be folly and madness in any Government to go in advance of the educated commercial opinion of the country. I certainly should think it not far from lunacy to attempt to force on the United Kingdom and the City of London a form of currency they did not thoroughly adopt and believe in.

*(11.26.) The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): One of the last words which fell from my right hon. Friend was the word "lunacy." I have been told that there are three great forces which produce lunacy—love,

religion, and currency. From his extremely luminous and sane speech it is clear that at least the last of these three forces has not in the slightest degree affected him. I think that mono-metallists have made a great error in not grappling more seriously and at an earlier period with the problems which bi-metallists have put forward. There are too many mono-metallists who simply treat the whole bi-metallist theory as if it was not worth consideration. That is a practice to which I always demur, for I hold that many of the arguments adduced are strong arguments and require to be seriously dealt with. But the great point is this. Supposing we were to adopt the bi-metallic system, and were to remedy, as I believe we should to a considerable extent, the grievances which are alleged, and I believe with great truth, to exist under the present system, should we not at the same time be opening up serious grievances, great risks in another direction, the ill effects of which we might possibly not be able to see at the present moment? I accept two out of the three points put forward by my right hon. Friend and other speakers on behalf of bi-metallism. I believe that the uncertainty which is produced in our transactions with India by the present state of things is unsatisfactory, and if we could meet it, it would be an enormous advantage. Still, it is perhaps possible to exaggerate the inconvenience which arises from this uncertainty, because after all there are a great number of countries with whom we trade where the same uncertainty exists, and it exists much more in the case of countries with a depreciated currency than in the case of those using silver, and if we were to exclude from the purview of profitable operations all those countries that have a currency less stable than our own, I am afraid the area over which profits are realised by this country would sustain serious diminution. Our merchants are accustomed to deal with fluctuating currencies; and in answer to my hon. Friend behind me I may say that the very telegraph to which he alluded, in his able speech in seconding the Motion, as having diminished the profits of merchants has been one of the chief instruments by which it has been possible to meet the uncertainties of currencies.

If I am not mistaken, it is the general practice of merchants at the present time to attempt to meet the uncertainties of exchange by ascertaining by telegraph the exact rate of exchange, and then to cover themselves by securing that rate. I admit broadly that if we should have a similar currency with India, if it were possible to get rid of these uncertainties, we should take a great step in facilitating our relations with that great portion of the Empire. It is to be deplored that such great fluctuations should have taken place. A second object in which I agree with my right hon. Friend is in the desire, if it were possible, to have one currency throughout the world, that all our transactions might be conducted on a more stable footing as regards the metal in which debts are paid. I do not agree with the third point my right hon. Friend made, as regards the grievance he raised with respect to the system of bounties—temporary bounties he called them—which are now offered to the cotton goods manufacturers of India. How can my right hon. Friend be sure that these are temporary bounties? It would have been a temporary bounty in the event of our returning again to the old standard. For a certain number of years we have been considerably below that which used to be considered as the proper standard between the two metals. I doubt whether, unless the countries of Europe and America take some great international action, how far it can be said these bounties are temporary. I do not know how we can regulate them. The House would take a great responsibility on itself if it attempted to decide whether this is a temporary difficulty or a permanent difficulty—and whether, if we consider it a temporary difficulty, we should take steps to throw backward the industrial movement that has taken place in India. We must look at it from the point of view of what is right and what is wrong. We have a serious responsibility in the matter. Supposing we endeavoured to meet all the difficulties that exist at the present moment, we have to consider whether in doing justice to some, we may not find ourselves doing an immense injustice to others. Look at the position of India in this matter. There was a time when India suffered enormously from the fall in the price of silver. Some 10 years ago, and even later, the sufferings that India experienced were extreme, and I differ entirely from the right hon. Member for Derby, who attempted to minimise these difficulties, and said that the question was as to the salaries of a few Indian officials. India owed £15,000,000 to this country, and it had to remit that £15,000,000 here in gold, and the loss on exchange which India had to bear amounted to £3,000,000, an amount which paralysed for a long time the whole finances of India. But I am not sure whether I exaggerate in suggesting that India has now settled down, more or less, to the new conditions. New trades have been developed in consequence of this state of things, and the price of silver being low has had a great effect upon India generally. Supposing, if it were possible, we were to re-cast the present system and raise the rate of exchange, should we be right or wrong in taking that serious step? If I had time I should wish to say one word upon that point before I sit down. But with regard to the position of India generally, surely we have to consider this: whether now that these interests have grown up, and now that the very attitude of those who used to speak in the name of India has changed, and they take a different course to that which they recommended before, whether we ought to attempt to restore the old state of things artificially. Thus I doubt whether my right hon. Friend is right in urging this temporary bounty as one of the reasons why we should proceed to the adoption of bi-metallism. I agree that theoretically it is possible to return to bi-metallism; but, while it is theoretically possible, there are many practical difficulties in the way. I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who said that he could not understand how it could be even theoretically possible. It has been stated by the Royal Commission that the existence of bi-metallism in France did form for a long period of years a powerful means of retaining the ratio between the two metals. By legislation, the ratio was fixed; and the question has been asked, Why did the Latin Union take the course they did? For this obvious reason: While other Mints were open for silver, only a portion flowed into the Latin Union. But the Latin Union saw that it might have to bear the whole brunt of the silver that came from Germany when Germany had adopted a gold currency, and also the product of the new silver mines worked in America, and it was natural that it closed its Mints. We were in the same position in India. While Mints remained open they constitute a powerful force in sustaining the relative value between the two metals. The fact that Germany poured its silver into the Latin Union caused the difficulty in those countries, because the area was so limited. I want the mono-metallist to understand that argument, for if we could get an area wide enough the bi-metallic principle is theoretically possible, provided that you can be certain that all parties will maintain the agreement. But then you come to one of the practical difficulties to which I have alluded, and you must look at the practical difficulties as well as the theoretical possibilities on the other side. I have contended, and I am prepared still to contend, that I should prefer the currency of the world to depend rather upon two metals than upon one metal. To those views I gave expression in 1878. I am not now speaking individually of the United Kingdom; but I should like to see silver pressed into service to do the work of the currency of the world as well as gold, so that the currency of the world should not depend on one metal, but on two. While I rejected the idea of a Bi-metallic Union in 1878, I said this—that the mono-metallists were in the wrong who wished to make a crusade for the adoption of a general gold currency. I should be only too glad if other countries would have a silver currency, for it would steady both the exchanges of this country and of India. Therefore, I do not wish to say one word to discourage other countries from adopting the bi-metallic system. I have always looked upon silver and gold not as antagonistic to each other, not as being articles, the price of one of which would necessarily fall when the other rose, but I have looked upon them rather as partners who together were doing the work of the currency of the world. Allusion has been made to the rate of discount in connection with the scarcity of gold; but such allusion confuses capital and currency. The alleged scarcity of gold has to me another meaning. I think that the amount of gold used as currency is extremely small to bear the enormous burden which is put upon it. I admit that, as interested in the commerce and monetary system of this country, I feel a kind of shame that, on the occasion of £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 of gold being taken from this country to Brazil or any other country, it should immediately have the effect of causing a momentary alarm throughout the country. I doubt seriously whether the stock of gold which we have in this country in an available form is one whit too large; on the contrary, I think it is rather too small. Therefore, I think that as long as other countries use silver they are doing a general service to the commerce of the world. If a gold standard had once for all been adopted, and prices had adopted themselves to such a great change, the existing gold might be sufficient for all purposes; but a transition involving a first demand for gold creates great difficulties for those countries whose currency is gold, because the narrow margin which is now allowed in all currency transactions involves such inconvenience when any sudden demand is made upon what is a comparatively small stock. Therefore, I do not admit the argument which rejects allusion to the scarcity of gold, and I say that I should be glad to see silver performing as much work as is possible in the currency. But we have to see what is practicable. What are we asked to do by the Motion now before the House? We are asked to convoke another Conference to see whether some international agreement cannot be arrived at. Well, Conferences have been held and very exhaustive Reports made, and no result has been possible. We have appointed a Royal Commission, and what is the result? A divided Report; and certainly it is not upon any divided Report that we have a right to take the immensely responsible step of tampering with the general currency. The argument has been used that we might by a general arrangement adopt a bi-metallic system. I have no time now to state what I consider would be the danger of such a course; but though you might have a Conference that would come to an agreement, the interests would be so diverse that I have very grave doubts whether that agreement would be permanently kept. I ask what security we should have that that agreement would be permanently kept, and not only that, but would it not be necessary also that all countries should believe that it would be permanently kept? If you knew that there would be no desire ever to draw back, then silver and gold might circulate together on the ratio fixed, subject to one important condition, that the outside uses of gold and silver should be, comparatively speaking, analogous, and that there should be no great desire to use gold rather than silver for any other purposes. But there will always be anxiety to keep gold for emergencies, and it is this which makes me doubt whether a general international agreement would be permanently safe. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland did not attach great importance to that objection; but I confess that to me it is a very important one. In case of war every one strains for gold, and hon. Members may not be aware that gold is kept in reserve by foreign countries for the purposes of a war chest. When war was declared, or before war was declared, one country might take measures to attract gold to itself and that might alarm other countries, and there might be a scramble for gold under which the agreement would break down and general confusion arise. Again, you would have to pass through a long period before you arrived at your agreement, and what fearful speculation would not arise in the interval? I admit that that would only be a temporary difficulty; but I think that the Government would only be justified in going to a Conference if it knew that the country was behind it and that it was practically almost certain of success. I think it would be wrong to call a Conference in the belief that we might carry out something which we could not effect without the assent and co-operation of foreign countries, and which we might not even be able to persuade the public of this country to adopt. Therefore, I hold that it is entirely premature to carry such a plan into execution; and I think that hon. Members will do well, acting upon their own responsibility—

for this is an open question—to vote that the words proposed to be left out shall stand part of the Question.

*(11.48.) SIR JOHN LUBBOCK: Sir, I do not wish to stand between the House and a Division, and in the few minutes which remain before the necessary close of the Debate under the new Rule it is impossible to reply fully to the two right hon. Gentlemen who have just sat down; but I have been referred to several times in the course of the debate, and there are some points on which I should be glad to say a few words. The case of India has been referred to by several speakers, and, of course, it must be admitted that the Revenue of India, being payable in silver, has fallen in consequence of the depression in silver; but if the Government have received less it is because the taxpayer has paid less. The commerce of India has not suffered. On the contrary, the exports and imports have risen from £93,000,000 in 1873 to £180,000,000 in 1888. Indeed, part of the case of the supporters of bi-metallism consists in a complaint that the trade of India has so greatly increased. I cannot help thinking that the difficulties of exchange have been greatly exaggerated; at any rate, it is a remarkable fact that, while the export trade of India since 1873 has risen more with gold-using than with silver-using countries, namely, 27 per cent. only with silver-using and 62 per cent. with gold-using countries. The right hon. Gentleman said that no one would deny that the fall in silver of 20 per cent. operated as a bounty to that extent in favour of the Indian manufacturer. But that is by no means admitted. Hon. Members near me will, I am sure, demur to any such statement. Suppose an Indian and an English manufacturer send to a neutral market goods of a character which were formerly worth 1,000 rupees, or £50. It is said that a fall of 20 per cent. in prices, including that of silver, gives the Indian manufacturer a bounty of 20 per cent. This is an entire fallacy. No doubt the Indian producer would still receive 1,000 rupees, which would buy as much as before, while the English producer would only receive £37 10s., instead of £50; but then by the hypothesis his £37 10s. would buy as much as £50 did formerly, and as much as 1,000 rupees do now. I do not believe that the fall in prices is due to the fall in silver, or that it implies any substantial appreciation of gold. It is due mainly to improvements in production and greater cheapness in transport. Take the case of American wheat. In 20 years there has been a fall of no less than 20s. a quarter. But then the railway charges from the interior are 11s. a quarter less, freight 4s., loading, unloading, &c., 3s. less, and boys 1s. This accounts for 19s. out of the 20s. No doubt agriculturists and manufacturers suffer from the fall, and I sympathise with them. But when the hon. Member for Flintshire says that the working bees suffer and the drones gain, I ask who gains by the cheapness of bread? Who consumes the wheat? Surely the working bees. The working classes now have good employment, and wages are rising. They are the gainers, and I think the House will long hesitate before they alter the standard of value with the express object of raising the prices of the comforts and necessaries of life. My hon. Friends think they can fix a ratio between silver and gold. I entirely disbelieve in the power of any international arrangement to fix a ratio of value between any two articles of commerce. It has been said by several speakers that this was admitted by all the Commissioners. But that is not so. Mr. Birch and I entirely dissented, and our four colleagues admitted that this might be an agio either on the gold or silver coin. It must be remembered that gold and silver are not merely used for coinage. It is estimated that from £12,000,000 to £16,000,000 are used in the arts. Do my hon. Friends think they can fix the price of what is used in the arts? If not, neither can they do so for that part which is used for coinage. The cheaper metal will inevitably, as it always has, drive out the dearer. Under the bi-metallic arrangement of the Latin Union there was for years a considerable agio on the gold coins, and the arrangement broke down in 1873 because it was found impossible to maintain it any longer. It is a great convenience to have a sufficient amount of coinage of all three metals—gold, silver, and copper. The present system secures this, but under this proposal it

would be impossible. No one can foretell what the production of the mines will be, but, as sure as fate, either the gold will expel the silver, or, what now seems most probable, the silver will drive out the gold. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland and his Friends spoke of themselves as bi-metallists. The term was, however, misleading. True bi-metallism would be if the creditor could claim to receive, and the debtor to pay, the debt half in silver and half in gold. But what my hon. Friends propose is that one of the parties to the contract should be allowed to pay either in silver or in gold, at his option. It is estimated that we receive not less than £85,000,000 from our investments over sea; and what a remarkable fact it is that our investments over sea exceed by £20,000,000 the whole rent of the land of our own country, which only amounts to £65,000,000. Now, no doubt, part of the £85,000,000 is derived from shares and freight. But there still remains a very large sum, perhaps £40,000,000 to £50,000,000, payable by agreement, either in gold or silver. My hon. Friends, in their great generosity, propose that we should give to foreign countries the option of paying in which ever metal might become the cheaper of the two. If silver falls we are to be paid in silver; if gold falls, in gold. Moreover, the same uncertainty will apply to our internal trade. In fact, the arrangement will tend to drive all financial transactions to some country which is not so unwise as to adopt such a fluctuating currency. No reference has been made to our colonies. It is not likely that Australia, which produces no silver and much gold, will abandon its gold standard; and unless it does so the difficulties of exchange, whatever they are, will only be transferred from India to Australia. The mercantile community are quite opposed to these proposals. At the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce last year a resolution in favour of bi-metallism only found 11 supporters among 174 delegates. The hon. Member for Flintshire says that the prosperity of England ceased in 1873. I do not deny that some trades have been depressed, and that rents have fallen heavily. I sympathise greatly with those who have suffered. But, taking the country as a whole, so far from falling back, there has been an immense advance since 1873. Our exports have risen from £670,000,000 to £740,000,000, and adding on 20 per cent, which hon. Members say is the average fall in prices, the amount would be brought up to £890,000,000, showing the enormous increase of £220,000,000. The annual income of the country has risen from £514,000,000 to £636,000,000, showing an increase of income of no less than £122,000,000. The Clearing House transactions have risen from £6,000,000,000 to £7,600,000,000, showing an increase of no less than £1,600,000,000. Lastly, Mr. Giffen has shown that in the past 10 years the realised value of the property of the country has risen from £8,500,000,000 to £10,000,000,000, showing the enormous increase of £1,500,000,000. And yet my hon. Friends complain. Surely, such an increase ought to satisfy the wildest dreams of avarice. I cannot, therefore, think that my hon. Friends have shown any reason for a change, or have proved the practicability of the plan they propose, and I hope the House will not agree to the Amendment.

(11.55.) The House divided:—Ayes 183; Noes 87.—(Div. List, No. 52.)

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Committee upon Monday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolutions [17th April] reported (see pages 736, 788, 789, 790).

Resolutions agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (1890-91).

Copy ordered—

"Of Statement of Revenue and Expenditure as laid before the House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer when opening the Budget."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 183.)

INTOXICATING LIQUORS LICENCES (SCOTLAND.)

Return ordered—

"Of the number of Licences for the sale of Intoxicating Liquors, the renewal of which has been refused, in the year 1889 and four preceding years, by the Licensing Magistrates in each Licensing District in Scotland, showing also the result of Appeal (if any.)

Number of Licences for inns and hotels refused.	Number of Licences for public houses refused.	Number of Licences for dealers in excisable liquors and grocers trading in excisable liquors refused.	Number of Licences for sale of table beer refused.	Result of Appeal (if any).
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

—(*Mr. Provand.*)

MOTIONS.

KEW AND PETERSHAM VICARAGE.

On Motion of Mr. Jackson, Bill to provide for the division of the Vicarage of Kew and Petersham into two distinct vicarages, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jackson and Mr. William Henry Smith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 229.]

IRELAND—MR. M. HARRIS'S FUNERAL —CONDUCT OF THE POLICE.

On the Motion for the Adjournment of the House,

(12.19.) Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Before the rising of the House last night I endeavoured to obtain from the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Madden) some explanation with regard to the conduct of the police at the funeral of Mr. Matthew Harris, the late Member for East Galway, and who was well-known to many Members of this House. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was then unable to give any reply, and he suggested that I should put a question to-day. Adopting his suggestion, I gave notice of a question for to-day, and this afternoon put it to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. He was, however, unable to give me further information about it. He suggested that I should put a further question at the close of question time. At the close of question time he had disappeared behind the Speaker's chair, and, though he came back for a moment, I was unable to get an answer. I think I have some reason to complain of this neglect of duty on the right hon. Gentleman's part. Mr. Harris died on Monday last at Ballinasloe, and the funeral took place yesterday. I should, first, say what was the conduct of the police. The head constable of the place went to the friends of the deceased and put two questions to them. He first asked who was to be the speaker at the funeral? I respectfully submit that he had no right to put that question. He then demanded that a place should be reserved at the side of the grave for a note-taker appointed by the Government. This demand was, in my opinion, very properly resented and refused. I do not see why the sad ceremony of an interment should be ordered and arranged for the purpose of securing special accommodation for an official of the Government. The funeral procession was attended, and, in a moral sense, molested, by the presence of a body of police. Some of the police were in civilian costume, and apparently unarmed; while others were in uniform, and were armed with batons. The police accompanied the procession. They pushed their way into the graveyard, and, when the procession reached the grave, violently forced their way forward until they had taken up a position immediately surrounding the grave, and placed their note-taker at the graveside. To the great indignation of the people of Ballinasloe—an indignation which has been reflected throughout the whole country—they remained in this position until the interment had concluded, and the mourners had dispersed. I ask the cause for this proceeding. Was this done because it was the funeral of an Irish Member? Is it to be understood that even death does not relieve an Irish Member from the attentions of this Government? Mr. Matthew Harris had been tortured by the Government, and their confederates, at a time when he was suffering from the disease which ended in his death. I do not see how the cause of law and order, or the stability of the Constitution, would have suffered if the Government had been content to cease their attentions after his death. Or was it because the funeral was attended by some of the Irish Members? It was attended by a great concourse of people, of all parties and creeds, who united in paying a last tribute of respect to an able and upright man. My hon. Friend the Member for North-East Cork (Mr. W. O'Brien) was among those who were present. The policy of espionage and pursuit of the Member for North East Cork has reached the point of farcical absurdity. They have abandoned prosecutions against him so often that I should imagine that they would be more anxious to avoid finding fresh cause of prosecution against him, than to go in search of it. Had he not a right to speak at the grave? I am sure the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary could not imagine that my hon. Friend would attempt to discuss either the relations between landlords and tenants, or the policy of the Plan of Campaign, at the grave of Mr. Matthew Harris. The only prosecutions in Ireland on recent occasions have been with respect to these two subjects. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman did not imagine that my hon. Friend would have been guilty of either of these things at the grave of Mr. Harris. As a matter of fact, the few words spoken by my hon. Friend were simply words of eulogy of the life of his friend, and words his right to speak which the right hon. Gentleman will not deny. That being the case, I maintain that this intrusion of the police was extremely wanton and uncalled-for. I wish to ascertain whether the intrusion was that of the Government, or of some local busybody. If it was, as I infer from what the right hon. Gentleman said, the act of some subordinate, I request the right hon. Gentleman to say by whom, and when, and for what purpose the interference at the funeral took place. Great sacredness attaches to funerals in Ireland, as in all other civilised countries. In Ireland, owing to the sufferings and misfortunes of the country, the feeling is always particularly deep, and deserves to be respected, especially when the occasion is the death of a public man, who loved the people, and whom the people loved for his upright character. I speak, Sir, in the interests of peace. I believe that such interference as that which took place at the funeral of Michael Dwyer, and on the present occasion, although by the patience and forbearance of the people they may pass without conflict and disorder, may possibly lead at some time, as their tendency is to lead, either to the massacre of the people, which the Government care little about, or the massacre of the police. If there is any reason why these intrusions should be continued, let us know what the reason is. If not, let the Government issue an order to the police directing their discontinuance. I am too well-acquainted with the truculence of the Chief Secretary, and the offensive bad taste he displays on these occasions——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman is exceeding all limits of Parliamentary order and courtesy in debate.

MR. SEXTON: I do not know, Sir, whether you are aware that the Chief Secretary sneered in the most offensive manner.

*MR. SPEAKER: I was looking at the Chief Secretary, and I do not think the hon. Gentleman has a right to infer that because the right hon. Gentleman smiled he was smiling in any offensive sense.

MR. SEXTON: It may have been a smile, or it may have been a sneer. I may have been in error, and I will say no more about it. I have felt it to be my duty to denounce the interference of the police, which I regard as a wanton provocation of the public temper, as an insult to the representatives of the people, and as an outrage upon the dead.

*(12.30.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The hon. Member

appears to be highly indignant because the Government were not able before 3 o'clock this afternoon to obtain information from the police officials in a remote part of Ireland. The hon. Member has been good enough to interpret some expressions he saw in my face as a sneer against himself or his friends. At that moment, perhaps, I was to blame, but I was not following the purport of the speech of the hon. Gentleman, but was replying to an observation of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Madden) on the subject of the debate which occupied the attention of the House up to 12 o'clock to-night on the subject of bi-metallism. The information which, since question time, I have received from the Inspector is not in harmony with the account of the transaction given by the hon. Gentleman. I have said that application was made to be allowed to attend the meeting. ["It was not a meeting"; and Mr. Speaker, "Order, Order!"] Well, there were 2,000 people there. The police did not force their way into the churchyard. There were only five or six there besides the one in plain clothes. They asked permission to attend, and received no suggestion that their demand was regarded as an insult. No one objected to their presence; they simply walked with the rest of the crowd of 2,000 persons, and they paid as much respect to the dead as any one present.

Mr. SEXTON: The telegram I have received from Mr. O'Brien states that the police were informed that their presence was regarded as an outrage.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I can only give the information I have received. As in all such matters, I have no doubt the initiative rests with the Local Authority. If it had rested with the officials of the Castle I should probably have received earlier information than I did. The Local Authorities possibly supposed the funeral would be made the occasion of a political demonstration. In that case I do not see that the presence of the police would be an insult to either the dead or the living. If speeches were made they would have been reported in the daily papers, and there could be no more insult in their being reported by the police than in their being reported by the newspaper reporters. As a matter of fact I have no information on what grounds the police acted. I have no ground for believing that they acted harshly or imprudently or without due discretion. The information I have does not bear out the assertion that there was any violence shown by the police, or that the police had any ground for believing that their presence would be regarded as an insult.

*(12.37.) Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I venture to appeal to the Attorney General for Ireland, as the Chief Secretary cannot speak again, to give us some assurance that we shall have further investigation into this matter —that a perfectly independent Authority will be sent down to make an investigation into the exact circumstances of the matter. We must all feel it is a perfect outrage that an armed force——

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: They were not armed.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS: They must have been armed.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: They were the ordinary uniformed police.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS: The right hon. Gentleman cannot be so ignorant of the uniform of his constabulary in Ireland as not to know that they carry their side-arms on every occasion in Ireland. I repeat it is practically an armed force. No one in this House will say that the presence of armed men pressing their way among the mourners at a grave-side in England would not be considered an outrage. If such a thing occurred in England a great deal would be heard of it.

(12.40.) Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I really think the Chief Secretary might make some reply to the extremely temperate appeal of the hon. Gentleman. The Chief Secretary said the police did not know it would be regarded as an insult and outrage that they should be present at the grave. I do not know how the right hon. Gentleman can make that statement, believing it to be true, because he must know very well that in the case of the funeral of Mr. Michael Dwyer, in Tipperary, the very same thing occurred. Upon that occasion the police forced their way to the place of interment. The greatest indignation at the conduct of the police was felt throughout Tipperary and Ireland, for it was felt that the presence of the police was an outrage and an insult. Such being the circumstances in regard to the funeral of Mr. Dwyer, I ask the right hon. Gentleman how he can state, with any degree of accuracy, that the police in Ballinasloe did not believe that their presence at Mr. Harris's funeral would be regarded as an insult and outrage. I must take leave to say that it is the greatest possible proof of the influence for peace and tranquility which is exercised by the hon. Member for North-East Cork, that there was not upon that occasion some violent outburst upon the part of the people. I am quite convinced that if a much-respected public man was borne to the grave in this country and a force of armed men went to the graveside, those in attendance would make some demonstration against the outrage. If the Chief Secretary really understood the feelings of the people of the district in this matter he never would have made the speech he has just delivered. Instead of making light of the matter he would have expressed some sorrow at the occurrence, and given some assurance to the House that the Irish people should be spared the pain and the outrage of seeing insults offered to their leaders when they have passed away.

*(12.43.) Mr. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I also appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to offer some kind of explanation of this matter. Nothing stirs the people of Ireland more deeply than occurrences like that of which we complain. I cannot describe the effect they have had on me. When I entered the House I thought that perhaps what I had heard as to the demeanour of the Chief Secretary had been exaggerated, but I regret to say that I find it was not; indeed, his demeanour is worse than I supposed. Strong as were my feelings on Irish matters when I came here they are now intensified. I knew Mr. Matthew Harris for many years. He did not occupy that high position which many Members opposite think they occupy, but no man occupied a higher position in the affections of his countrymen than he. He sacrificed all for his country, he devoted all his time and energy for the good of those amongst whom he lived. Although he was persecuted by the Government during his lifetime, I think he might have been allowed to be committed to the earth in peace and quietness. If the Government had an ounce of sense it would be just on occasions such as that in question that they would hold aloof. I really do not know what the Chief Secretary is aiming at. It appears to me that he wishes to drive us to violence.

(12.46.) The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, Dublin University): I merely wish to say that I meant no discourtesy to hon. Members opposite in not rising to respond to the appeals made to me. I did not rise, because all the information the Government possesses on this subject has been fully placed before the House by my right hon. Friend.

(12.47.) Earl COMPTON (Barnsley): The question addressed to the Attorney General was whether he would not make some further investigation. I would not have spoken if the matter had been taken up in a proper spirit by the Chief Secretary. I feel it is only right we English Members, who are most anxious to do all we can to pacify Ireland in all ways, and, if it is possible, to help even the Chief Secretary in pacifying the country, should every now and then take part in these discussions to show we are in earnest, and also to show that we are of opinion that the Irish people should be allowed to bury their dead without the presence of the police. It is quite natural the Irish Members should take exception to the action of the Government in this matter. They have, in no immoderate manner, brought the matter forward. On the contrary, they have stated their case, with one exception, without temper. I only ask for information, and I think the least the Minister responsible for Ireland can do is to afford it.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I never refused to give further information. On the contrary, I am always glad to give it. If a question is put upon the Paper I will do my best to answer it.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman ascertain on what ground the police thought they had reason to intrude their presence, and will he report the result to the House?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course, I will do my best to give information, if the hon. Gentleman will put a question on the Paper; I always do.

House adjourned at ten minutes
before One o'clock, till
Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 21st April, 1890.

THE ACCIDENT TO THE STEAMSHIP *CITY OF PARIS.*

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*EARL DE LA WARR: My Lords, in putting the question which stands on the Notice Paper of the House with regard to the passenger ship *City of Paris*, I wish to call your Lordships' attention for a few moments to one or two circumstances connected with it. First, as to the formidable nature of the accident, it is described in a well-known publication, the *Engineer*, as being without parallel in the history of navigation of steamships. I will give your Lordships a few particulars showing the character of the vessel. She is, I believe, the fastest ship afloat, and of great size and power. She is stated to be 560 feet long, 63 feet beam, and 42 feet in depth. Her tonnage is about 10,500, horse-power about 18,000, and she has accommodation for 1,000 passengers. She is propelled by twin-screws, and driven by triple-expansion engines of the latest and most approved construction for obtaining the greatest speed at the least proportionate consumption of fuel. The engines make about 85 revolutions per minute. With your Lordships' permission I will now quote a few lines from the *Engineer*—

> "At half-past 5 on the evening of the 25th March the *City of Paris* was about 2 6 miles from the coast of Ireland running full speed. There were in each engine-room at the time three men, one on each platform. The man on the top platform felt the tailrod of the low pressure engine vibrate and went forward. He had not gone five steps when the low-pressure engine flew to pieces. In a few seconds this great engine, standing about 45 feet high, was a heap of scrap. The explosion of a great shell might work such havoc in an ironclad. It is difficult, in the face of such total destruction, to form any theory as to what gave way first. We are puzzled to imagine how it is possible that materials so excellent could have been so completely destroyed. There is not a broken bar or bolt which does not show that it has only given way as the result of the utmost violence."

From this account it appears that the cause of the accident, according to the statements which have been given by those who have seen the vessel since she arrived at Liverpool, as to where the mischief originated, in what part of the ship or in what portion of the machinery is not yet clear. It appears, however, that the screw shaft, upwards of 100 feet in length and about 21 inches in diameter, had broken, and that the consequence of that was it became, of course, separated from the engines, which then went at a very rapid rate, shook the vessel, and caused very great vibration throughout her entire structure. I do not, my Lords, feel that I am in a position now to go further into the details. That was not my object to-night in putting this question to Her Majesty's Government, as I hope there may be an official investigation and a Report made upon the matter. I think I have stated enough to show the great importance of having an official inquiry. I will only mention one or two more facts which your Lordships ought to know. I do not think it is necessary to go farther into the details. I have thought it desirable to refer to them as showing the great importance of an inquiry into an occurrence which I believe it will turn out has arisen, according to all the information I possess, from the fact that sufficient precautions were not taken. I do not desire in any way to prejudice the question, neither do I wish to cast blame upon any of the persons connected with the vessel. On the contrary, I feel that I ought to speak of the exemplary conduct of the crew, and, indeed, of all persons on board. There cannot be a doubt that the ship was built upon the best known principles for ensuring safety as well as for speed; but I think there is reason for asking whether all the appliances for preventing danger to passenger ships were used. It may be found upon inquiry that they were not. But on two points specially do I wish now to speak, I mean of the appliances which were used in this vessel. I would venture to ask Her Majesty's Government, in the event of no further inquiry being made, if the House can be informed whether the *City of Paris* was provided with a well-known safety appliance for the engines of steamships, I mean a marine engine governor, one of the chief objects of which is, in case the shaft is broken and becomes detached from the engines, to very much lessen, if this appliance is properly constructed, if not altogether to prevent great mischief. Only a few minutes ago I received a communication from a person who is well qualified by his knowledge of these matters to give an opinion (I do not know that I am at liberty to mention his name) that the *City of Paris* had what is called a governor, but that it was only useful under certain circumstances, and would not have been efficient for the purpose of preventing this accident. As your Lordships are doubtless aware, I am not speaking from my own personal knowledge of these matters; but I have reason to believe that what I have stated is correct. The other question to which I wish to direct your attention for a few moments is, had the vessel sufficient sailing-power to keep her on her course when under sail alone. We have had, I think, already a practical answer to that question—that she had not sufficient sailing power. I believe that all the reports which have reached us show that the vessel drifted many miles out of her course, and that if she had fallen in with bad weather the consequences would have been most serious. I am not in a position to speak with authority on the subject; but I think it is a point deserving of the greatest attention, that no passenger steamship should be allowed to go to sea without having sufficient sailing power to keep her on her course. Those, my Lords, are two questions which, if the matter comes under inquiry by Her Majesty's Government, will, I hope, be duly considered. I would now ask Her Majesty's Government whether any inquiry will be made into this accident, which must be recognised as extremely serious, involving as it did the lives of more than 600 passengers besides the crew on board.

*THE EARL OF LIMERICK: My Lords, I have been requested by my noble Friend Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who is detained on the Railway Rates Inquiry in Ireland, to answer the noble Earl's question. An official investigation has been ordered by the Board of Trade into the case of the *City of Paris*, and the Report will be published in due course. If the noble Earl then desires to move that the Report should be laid on the Table of the House there will be no objection.

Earl De La Warr

CRIMINAL SENTENCES.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, I feel that I need make no apology for calling your attention to the subject mentioned in the notice which I have given; for I am quite sure there cannot be two opinions about its importance, and I think I shall show that it would be difficult to entertain doubt as to its urgency. It is no new thing to hear complaints of the inequality of the sentences pronounced upon criminals, and the complaint may be said to be an old-standing one. But hitherto that inequality has arisen, for the most part at all events, merely from the idiosyncracies of the particular tribunals which have been administering the Criminal Law in their estimates in particular cases of the punishment which ought to be awarded. The matter, however, has now assumed a new phase, inasmuch as vital differences of opinion as to the principles which should regulate and measure the sentences to be pronounced have not only presented themselves, but have been avowed and acted upon. The view taken by some is that the sentences should be meted out with a regard only to the gravity of the offence to be dealt with; that there should be no reference to the previous career or earlier convictions of the prisoner then to be sentenced; that to punish a trivial or small offence with lengthened imprisonment or penal servitude by reason of the previous career of the offender is wholly unjustifiable; and that the length of sentence ought solely and exclusively to be regulated by a regard to the circumstances of the particular act for which sentence was then to be pronounced. One consequence, at least, of this difference of opinion has been that we have seen Judges at successive Assizes, in their Charges to the Grand Jury, criticising and attacking the principles which had been acted upon by their predecessors, and giving their own views on the subject—a spectacle which certainly is not edifying. In saying this I do not intend to cast the slightest blame upon these learned Judges; because where such differences of opinion exist, and where expression has been given to one view of the case, it is inevitable that those who entertain a different opinion, and are going to act upon it, should make their difference of opinion clear. At the same time, this difference of opinion has, of course, taken a practical shape, and we have seen sentences vastly differing in their severity inflicted upon prisoners committed for precisely the same offences, under circumstances of the same gravity, and where the previous record of convictions was almost precisely the same. One prisoner might get seven years' penal servitude, and at the succeeding Assizes another might get two months' imprisonment, so that the prisoner who had committed the later offence and received the later sentence had served his time, and got back to his home or to his old associates, while the other prisoner, committed under precisely the same circumstances, had still several years to remain in penal confinement. I do not think it can be disputed that inequalities of this description are in themselves an evil. They tend to create and foster a belief that the law in its administration is unjust, and that it proceeds upon no settled principle, but upon the mere caprice of those who administer it. I think I shall have the concurrence of your Lordships in this at all events: that whatever discretion must be left to our tribunals in the application of our system of punishment, the principles which should guide those who administer the law and apply that system ought to be settled by the State, and ought not to be left to the individual idea or emotion of the particular tribunal which has to pronounce the sentence. The differences of view to which I have alluded are supported by arguments of cogency and weight; and I venture to think that the time has come when the State should intervene, and should weigh well these opposing views and arguments, when some pronouncement should be made upon them by authority, and when the system should be settled, and its application only left to those who have to administer the law. I will state shortly what are the opposing views, and the leading arguments which have been from time to time urged in support of them. There are those who advocate short sentences only for small offences, contending that the punishment should be distinctly proportionate to the offence, and should have regard to that alone, and not to the career of the offender. They urge that to pass a sentence of penal servitude or a long term of imprisonment for a trifling offence is cruel to the person sentenced, and shocks the sense and sentiment of the community by the disproportion between the punishment and the offence. There are, indeed, some who urge that no regard ought to be had to previous convictions in weighing the punishment to be inflicted on an offender, inasmuch as he has already suffered the punishment for his offence, and has under his previous conviction paid the penalty to the State: that he has wiped out the offence, and that to keep it in view in sentencing him for a new offence is, in reality, punishing him for it a second time. It is also said that these short sentences are as effective for their purpose, and have been proved to be so, as long sentences of penal servitude; that light sentences are not followed by an increase of the crime that has to be punished; and, that this being so, it is more merciful to the prisoner to inflict short terms of imprisonment only, while, at the same time, it is less burdensome to the State, inasmuch as the shorter the term of imprisonment the less will be the cost to the State for the maintenance of the prisoner, and the smaller the consequent public burden. There is another argument also urged, to the effect that if you pass long sentences for small offences against property—such, for instance, as trifling larcenies—it renders it impossible for you to mark, as you ought to mark, the distinction between graver and lighter offences, and disables you from measuring the difference between offences against person and against property. If for those trifling thefts you pass these long sentences, you seem to regard less seriously cases in which limbs are rendered useless and health injured than you regard the loss of a few pounds, or of a watch, or an article of clothing. I own that to me this last consideration appears to be of no little weight. I have thus stated what I understand to be the leading views of those who advocate that punishment should be thus meted out in short sentences, and if not with no regard, at all events with not any great regard, to the previous career of the prisoner. I do not propose to state my own views upon this subject generally on the present occasion, for this reason—that I am urging upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity for an inquiry into this matter, and I think that it would be inexpedient for me to commit myself to any views. Indeed, I frankly confess that on some of the points to which I shall call attention I myself feel as much as any of your Lordships the necessity of patient and careful inquiry into the subject. But on one point I must express my opinion. It is not a point which can be elucidated by further inquiry, and it is this: I cannot at all subscribe to the doctrine that the State is not justified in having regard to the previous career, the number of convictions of the prisoner, and the want of effect from the punishment already undergone, in determining the sentence to be passed in a particular case. I do not assent to the view that a prisoner, by undergoing his sentence, wipes out all his previous record, and that you are punishing him a second time if, when he is brought before you again, you look at his previous career to aid you in considering whether it will be sufficient to give him a short sentence. I hold strongly to the view that early sentences to the extent of the third or fourth, or even more—I am not at all fixing a limit at the moment—should be as light as possible, consistently with the gravity of the offence committed, because there are many cases where offences committed in early life have been afterwards redeemed by an entirely different career. But if you are not to look at the previous record of the prisoner to see whether he has been often convicted before or not, it seems to me impossible to deal with the matter in that fashion. All that I am expressing my opinion upon is this: that the State is perfectly justified in ascertaining whether a prisoner had been previously convicted, how he had been acting before and what punishments had been inflicted upon him, in order that the punishment inflicted might be sufficiently deterrent. That leaves it entirely an open question how far it is expedient to have regard to previous convictions for the purpose of increasing the punishment to be awarded. I think, too, that the present tendency in some quarters to inflict lighter sentences, and to consider it unwise to inflict sentences of penal servitude for trivial offences, is a reaction in some degree, and I think a wholesome reaction, from the over-severity which has been shown in other quarters in the extent to which long terms of penal servitude have often followed upon even trifling and minor offences. I could cite numberless instances of this, but I will give one or two only as illustrative of what often takes place. Take this case for example. A prisoner, after one brief committal to gaol before his trial for the offence of stealing a cup, was sentenced to five years' penal servitude and seven years' police supervision. Another prisoner, who, it was true, had been previously convicted many times and committed for small terms of imprisonment for 16 minor offences, was sentenced at a Quarter Sessions to eight years' penal servitude and seven years' police supervision for stealing some watercresses and shell-fish.

Lord ESHER: Was that a sentence by Judges?

Lord HERSCHELL: I think it was at Quarter Sessions. I do not mean to cast any slur at all upon the administration of justice at Quarter Sessions. I believe that at the vast majority of Quarter Sessions in the country justice is extremely well-administered; but I think it right to say that those who have paid attention to this matter have directed my notice to the fact that it is rather at Quarter Sessions than at Assizes that the habit of passing very considerable terms of penal servitude after previous conviction is followed. I believe that this has, to some extent, arisen from the fact—which, however, would not explain the second sentence of eight years, though it might explain the other—that no sentence of less than five years' penal servitude can be passed, and that consequently between a sentence of 18 months' imprisonment and one of five years' penal servitude there is no middle course. I am aware that a sentence of two years' imprisonment may be given; but the regulations and discipline of the gaols are such that it is desirable to avoid that sentence, if possible, and therefore it is scarcely ever passed. Therefore, practically, if the 18 months' term required to be exceeded there was no alternative but to inflict the five years' penal servitude. I think that was a mistake, and that it has been unfortunate in its operation, and I rejoice to hear that the Government contemplates reducing the term of five years to three years, so that there may be a more gradual extension of punishment in cases in which it is necessary to go beyond the term of 18 months' imprisonment. Now I will state the opposition to these views of light sentences to which I have called your Lordships' attention. Let me say, at the outset, that there has been in some quarters the impression that those who advocate light sentences are actuated rather by a regard for the prisoner, by feelings of compassion, and by the wish that a prisoner shall be sentenced to no more punishment than that to which it is essential he should be condemned; whilst those who are in favour of longer terms of imprisonment, or of penal servitude, are actuated less by regard for the prisoner and rather by consideration for the interests of the community and the necessity of protecting property. The principal advocates of those views to which I am going to call your Lordships' attention are bodies to whom no such suggestion will apply. I am quite sure when I tell your Lordships who they are you will see that if they differ from the view, which I will call that of leniency, it is with no lesser desire than can be entertained by the advocates of that view for the advantage and reformation of the prisoner. Chief among those who advocate views opposed to those I have mentioned are the Howard Society and the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. Without committing myself to all the views advocated by the Howard Society, I am prepared to admit—and I am sure your Lordships will admit—that it has done useful work in gathering information with regard to the treatment of offenders and the mode in which crime should be dealt with; that it has made many recommendations for improving the law, and that it has shown a tender regard for the interests of prisoners. As to the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, your Lordships will recognise the good work it also has done, and that by its means many a man has been saved from relapsing into crime, and given a chance of retrieving his character and pursuing an honest career. I mention this because I think it would be a great mistake if it were supposed that this difference of opinion, as to what I will term leniency or severity, depends upon any difference of feeling or sympathy towards the unfortunate prisoners—for many of them are unfortunate—who come within the reach of the Criminal Law. Now, these two societies, although they differ entirely from those who advocate the view to which I have called your Lordships' attention, that no regard should be paid to the previous career of the prisoner, are not altogether at one as to the course which they think should be pursued. But, my Lords, I may say, in the first place, that the view that those lighter punishments are not followed by any increase in the number of offenders is one that has not met with universal acceptance, and it is obvious that, in order to arrive at any conclusion on the point, a survey of considerable breadth would be necessary. And for this reason: It may be that in a particular borough or county where the experiment has been tried there has been no increase in the number of prisoners coming up for trial, and yet there may be a relative increase, because if crime diminished elsewhere while it was stationary there, it is clear that, compared with other parts of the country, there would relatively be an increase. Upon that point I express no opinion, but I think it is a matter deserving of investigation. The other view urged is, that repeated short sentences are useless in deterring an offender, that they bring the law into contempt, and operate really as an encouragement to crime. If a person, upon being convicted, suffers a short sentence, and then goes out into the world again free to commit another crime, with the certainty that another short sentence will result upon conviction for it, so far from acting as a deterrent it acts as a positive encouragement. More than that, it is urged that it tends to lead others besides the criminal himself to think that crime is a matter of comparatively small account, because the punishment is only slight, and hence those who have watched and studied the question assert that the fears of those who might otherwise abstain from crime are very much removed by finding that it will only meet with penal results that will very soon pass over. In fact, they seem to be so little terrible that this sort of language is heard among criminals:—

"You need not be afraid of the beak, he will only give you a few days or a few weeks; I have been lots of times in quod and I don't care a fig for it; you will soon come out again and be as jolly as ever; who cares for the beak?"

My Lords, you will quite understand from language of that kind the result of treating repeated offences with only light sentences. That there are many cases in which light sentences produce little or no effect upon the offender is certain, and I will give two or three illustrations from cases taken at hap-hazard from the records of a single Quarter Sessions, but I suppose they might be paralleled in many other instances. A prisoner was sentenced in June, 1837, to six months' imprisonment. (Your Lordships will understand that I am not giving the convictions at Petty Sessions at all. In many cases there were, besides those which I am going to read, a number of convictions at Petty Sessions.) The same prisoner, in October, 1888, was convicted and sentenced to two months' imprisonment; in March, 1889, he was convicted of an equally serious offence and sentenced to only one month's imprisonment. Another case was this: On the 13th of December, 1887, a man was sent to prison for four months for housebreaking; on the 3rd of May, 1888, very soon after he came out of gaol, he was again convicted of housebreaking, and sentenced to five months' imprisonment; and on the 17th of March, 1889, the same prisoner, only two or three months after he came out of prison, was a third time convicted of a similar offence, and he was then sentenced to two months' imprisonment. I am now going to cite an extreme case. I do not know whether there may not be other cases like it, but at the particular Quarter Sessions this was the measure of the punishment that was awarded. A woman was sentenced in January, 1884, to six months' imprisonment; in April, 1885, to eight months; in July, 1886, to 14 days; in August, 1886, to two months; in December, 1886, to three months; in April, 1887, to three months; in August, 1887, to two months; in June, 1888, to one month; in July, 1888, to two months; in October, 1888, to three months; and for an offence committed on February 27, 1889, she was sentenced in March to four months' imprisonment. It is perfectly obvious that these punishments had not had the slightest deterrent effect upon this particular prisoner, and such cases are naturally pointed to in order to show that repeated short sentences have no deterrent effect whatever. In answer to these cases it may be said that other cases might doubtless be adduced of persons who have been sentenced to penal servitude and who have, shortly after their release, relapsed into crime, and that, no doubt, is true. The argument, then, is this. It is said that these short sentences are not merciful to the prisoners, because it is hopeless and impossible, in so limited a period, to produce reformation, or to teach habits of industry to inveterate offenders, and that if prisoners were kept longer in detention such reformation would be, at least, rendered more possible. The recommendations made by the authorities to which I have called attention differ somewhat. The Howard Society advocate a steady, though a small and gradual, increase of punishment for each offence. They are not in favour of any sudden jump, or of very lengthened terms of punishment, for small offences, but they add this: that it should be made certain, on conviction for an offence, whatever the punishment awarded for that offence might be, that if the offence were repeated, the punishment would be somewhat greater; and that if there were only that certainty of increase the punishment would be likely to be more deterrent than when, for aught the prisoner knows, and judging from his past experience, the punishment may be lighter instead of heavier. I believe that is a matter which your Lordships will think worthy of careful consideration. They also suggest that, in some cases, where a prisoner needs more lengthened supervision, police supervision should be substituted for penal servitude. Your Lordships will be aware that police supervision often accompanies sentences of penal servitude; but these authorities suggest that it should accompany considerably lighter sentences, and that the necessity might thus be done away with of punishing with lengthened detention cases where otherwise that would be unavoidable. On the other hand, some Judicial authorities have a strong objection to police supervision; they will not inflict it, and question very much its expediency and advantage. There is one suggestion made by the Howard Society, in connection with this subject, which I think deserving of consideration—namely, whether it might not be possible to introduce police supervision only if a prisoner failed to report himself to some Authority, such as the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, for example; that is to say, that if the prisoner reported himself to that society police supervision might be dispensed with, and that, in that way, you might obtain all the advantage of police supervision without the disadvantages which lead to such strong objection being taken to it. The Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society also deprecate these repeated short sentences, and they deprecate them, too, in the interest of the prisoners. Their view is that if a certain number of convictions and short sentences prove insufficient you should enlarge those sentences after a certain limit, whether you fix that limit at two, or three, or four convictions, and that then there should always be a certainty, save in exceptional cases, of a long term of imprisonment. Their experience shows that the chance of the reformation of offenders, after a term of penal servitude, is considerably greater than it is in the case of prisoners who are sentenced to short periods of imprisonment. The Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society have obtained information from some other societies upon this subject. I wish to avoid troubling your Lordships with details, but I may say that the balance of opinion amongst those societies who have been for many years interested in putting prisoners in the way of getting an honest livelihood, is strongly against repeated short sentences. They say that the results of such committals have not been satisfactory, while in the other cases they have been quite the reverse. Indeed, many of the societies have given up all attempts to assist offenders who have been imprisoned a number of times for short periods, because their experience has proved to them that it is hopeless to attempt to do so, and that they are only throwing their money away in attempting it. Those who were applied to had rendered assistance in 265 cases, and out of those 66 had been convicted again. After they had had assistance rendered to them they had returned to their evil courses, and had again been sent to prison; and there were only 95 who could in any way be pronounced satisfactory. In the case of one of those societies, during a particular year, 32 prisoners were assisted who had been convicted more than three times, and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment. Of those only 13 could be persuaded to go to work at all, and the results generally were most unsatisfactory; whereas, during the same time eight prisoners were assisted who had suffered penal servitude, and out of those seven went to work and turned out satisfactorily, and only one failed to report himself. My Lords, I venture to think that I have now, at all events, furnished materials sufficient to show that there is ground for inquiry into this matter, and that public advantage would be likely to result from that inquiry, and from a definite pronouncement by authority of the principles which should regulate the infliction of punishment in criminal cases. It has been suggested that advantage would be gained by the creation of a tribunal for the revision of sentences, in order to diminish the possibility of such inequalities as now exist. No doubt there are great difficulties in connection with the creation of a Court of Review. One difficulty which meets us at the outset, is the question whether such a tribunal is to be empowered to increase sentences, or is only to have power to decrease them. I think there would be a strong feeling against giving power to such a tribunal to increase sentences after they had been allotted by the Judges who had tried the prisoners. I am not at all sure that there might not be a considerable amount of opposition to the idea of any other tribunal increasing the severity of the sentences. The only other way of providing for a revision of sentences without doing that, would be to provide that no sentence should be pronounced at the trial, but should be submitted first to the revising tribunal. That course, I think, would be open to considerable objection. There are great advantages in sentences being pronounced immediately after conviction, and I do not think, therefore, that such a suggestion as that would generally commend itself. The only other course would seem to be to create such a tribunal, and to give it power to diminish but not to increase sentences. I am not sure that the objections to that would be insuperable. I will not pronounce any final opinion upon that. I am not sure, however, that, even if the power of such a Body were limited to diminishing undue severity, it would not be advantageous, although there might be cases of undue leniency where the sentences could not be increased. I pass now to a class of cases of an entirely different description, but where also, I think, it must be obvious that our present system has proved to be utterly unsatisfactory and hopelessly useless. I refer to the repeated short sentences for drunkenness, or for trivial offences connected with drunkenness, particularly in connection with drunken women. On a particular day, and this is only a sample of what might have been found on other days, in one of our prisons in the country, there were 33 women who had been convicted of drunkenness and petty offences 40 times and over; one had been convicted 60 times, one 98 times, and one 102 times. I am informed, moreover, that these figures do not really represent the number of times they had been convicted, as many of them change their names, so that their records cannot be completely traced, and sometimes they pay fines and do not go into prison at all. In one case, and this is given me by the chaplain of one of our gaols, one woman had been subjected to imprisonment 404 times, and, in addition to that, her husband had paid fines for her drunkenness 200 times, so that she must have been brought up no fewer than 600 times before the Magistrates. Another woman had scarcely ever been out of prison since she was 15, and she is now 63 years old; and almost every woman discharged on Monday, is re-imprisoned the same day or the next, is released on Thursday or Friday, and is in again on Saturday. Daily, there are cases of women returning to prison after less than a week's liberty. Here is an instance of how one woman spent her year, all the sentences being for short terms of imprisonment:—On January 23, 21 days; on April 8, four days; on April 14, 14 days; on May 2, 30 days; on June 2, 30 days; on July 5, 60 days; on September 30, seven days; on October 11, seven days; on October 25, seven days; on November 15, seven days; on November 23, 30 days; and on December 22, five days. I also have the record of a woman who has undergone the following sentences. I do not trouble your Lordships with all of them, but only give the successive short terms of imprisonment:—In 1864, six months; in 1865, three months; in 1866, five months; in 1867, three months; in 1868, two months; in 1869, one month; in 1870, three months; in 1871, six months; in 1872, six months; in 1873, 12 months; in 1874, five months; and in 1875, two months. In the face of these examples it must be obvious that the present system of dealing with such cases has wholly failed. Repeated convictions for short terms have not done good, but considerable harm. One can easily understand that a woman who has been sentenced to a few days' imprisonment in that way returns to the world with her craving for drink stronger than ever, and her immediate relapse is certain. Surely it is worth consideration whether it would not be possible to make a change. Why should not some different system be attempted? There are homes for inebriates, where those voluntarily submitting to discipline have been cured, and where not a few apparently hopeless drunkards have been turned into sober and useful members of society. May it not be worth trying whether these persons cannot be dealt with in some other fashion than at present? Of course, for such offences as those to which I have referred in connection with drunkenness 12 months' imprisonment could not be inflicted. I am not saying that would be desirable; but it might be possible to adopt a system of detention for a certain period in some home, if it were frankly recognised that the object was not punishment, but reformation. I do not think that there would be any public sentiment against submitting hopelessly incorrigible women to such a period of detention, for the purpose of keeping them from their drunken habits and teaching them to lead a better life. I am not urging this dogmatically, in any way, but only suggesting that it might be well worth considering whether some other system could not be adopted, seeing that the present method of dealing with such offenders has proved utterly ineffective. I have touched on certain points in connection with our system of punishment which need inquiry and investigation, especially on those which have led to the development of different opinions. I do not, however, wish to limit the inquiry to those points alone. Our present system of punishment has been in operation unaltered for a very long time, and, under those circumstances, is very apt to run in a particular groove. There has been sufficient experience to afford justification, to use a commercial expression, for "taking stock" of the system, and for inquiring whether it may not be too rigid in one direction, and too flexible or wanting in certainty in another direction. I have ventured, therefore, to draw your Lordships' attention to these points, and I think I have shown a groundwork, at all events, for the question which I am putting to Her Majesty's Government, whether an inquiry may not very well be instituted, which shall overhaul our present system of punishments, so that we may see whether it cannot be made more effective for the purpose for which it is designed.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, probably no one will doubt the importance and interest attaching to the subject which my noble and learned friend has brought forward. At the same time it is necessary that your Lordships should be very careful in accepting such a phrase as "a case for inquiry." In one sense every subject of debate is a case for inquiry and consideration by your Lordships, but not necessarily one to be dealt with by a Committee of Inquiry or by a Royal Commission. The facts of the case, as far as they are susceptible of being ascertained, are already within the knowledge of the country, but I will frankly admit at once that the matter is one which demands consideration by the persons responsible for legislation, namely, Her Majesty's Government. It is possible, however, to exaggerate the supposed differences between sentences by statements that such and such different punishments have been awarded for the same offence. Each of these words requires exposition. The same offence might be the same offence in point of law, but a very different offence indeed in point of moral culpability.

LORD HERSCHELL: I did not say "the same offences." I said "offences of the same gravity, and committed under the same circumstances."

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: If my noble and learned Friend means to ask for an examination of all sentences with reference to the circumstances and gravity of the offences, it is obvious that such an inquiry would be absolutely impossible, because it would be endless. It would not exhibit any principle, but merely the facts upon which individual Judges have passed sentences. On one or two of the subjects under discussion the Legislature has already pronounced authoritative judgment. My noble and learned Friend has brought before your Lordships the opinion entertained by some persons that previous convictions ought not to be taken into consideration in sentencing prisoners. But the taking into consideration of previous convictions in delivering sentence does not depend upon the views of individual Judges, because the Legislature has rendered an offender liable to graver punishment for the commission of an offence after a previous conviction. The offender becomes liable to graver punishment by reason of that circumstance alone. It is, therefore, clear that the State has already pronounced its judgment upon that principle. If it were necessary that that principle should be defended, my noble and learned Friend has himself very candidly pointed out why it is the right of the State to take into consideration the previous career of the criminal to be punished. But, my Lords, it is impossible not to know that the variety of views which have prevailed from time to time, among Judges is only the reflex of views which have prevailed in the State from time to time. I will take the instance given by my noble and learned Friend in regard to the periods of penal servitude. There was a notable case in which certain bankers had been sentenced to 14 years' transportation for the misapplication of certain securities. The history of the legislation on this subject is very extraordinary, and reflects a considerable light upon the change of views, not only of the Judges, but of the Legislature itself. That offence was at that time subject, as an extreme penalty, to 14 years' transportation; which three learned Judges thought ought to be inflicted in that case. Two years afterwards, the offence was dealt with by the Legislature and subjected only to five years' penal servitude. Then came an Act of Parliament which turned every sentence of five years' penal servitude into seven years. During that time there had been the power of inflicting a sentence of three years' penal servitude, but the Legislature deliberately took that away, making the term necessary to be inflicted five years. When the Legislature has itself exhibited that oscillation of view it is idle to suppose that among those who have to administer punishment there will not be different views held as to the principles on which punishment should be inflicted for the particular offences committed by persons who are brought before those who have to administer the law; and, unless you are to refer the sentences to some other tribunal, I do not know how you are to avoid the necessary result that different minds will take different views. Within the recollection of some of your Lordships the crimes of forgery and murder were punished with the same penalty; and it was thought very undesirable to relax the laws which inflicted the same punishment as for murder for the offence of forgery. Now, my Lords, the objections to any standard which could be fixed by the Legislature are too obvious to require statement. The Legislature cannot foresee the circumstances of each particular case, or see the consequences of every Act. There may be temptations such as would be very likely to influence persons of which the Legislature ought to have it in their contemplation that human nature might yield to. I suppose there are many things comprehended within the Criminal Law as to which it would be possible to say that while on the one hand you must enforce, so, on the other hand, you must not be so insensible to human frailty that you will inflict the extreme penalty allowed. Then what is the remedy? If you are to leave it to the Judge, the condition of things which my noble and learned Friend has described necessarily arises. The idiosyncracies of particular minds necessarily fasten upon some particular points. Others, again, will take a totally different view, and the views taken of the punishment to be awarded for particular offences, committed under varying conditions, must necessarily differ also. I must say that I do not take the view of my noble and learned Friend as to the impossibility and undesirability of increasing a sentence on appeal. When once the right to appeal for rectification of judgment is given, the tribunal appealed to must pronounce the judgment which ought originally to have been pronounced. I do not agree, therefore, with my noble and learned Friend in what he said with regard to the alteration of sentences where they have been either too lenient or too severe. Every one, I am sure, has, at times, been struck with the inadequacy of sentences, and I can only say that I receive many complaints of punishments which are too inadequate, as well as of punishments which are too severe. I do not think there would be such feeling as is supposed against correcting, on proper principles, such sentences. Only last week there was brought before me the case of a child of 11 years of age who had been subjected to the grossest cruelty and maltreatment by her father, and, in that case, the Magistrate thought it consistent with his duty to sentence the man to only one month's imprisonment. No doubt this sentence would to some persons seem almost a licence to the father to pursue in the future his course of abominable cruelty. I believe, however, that in that case, as in many others, the outside world does not always understand the principles upon which the Magistrates proceed. No doubt the Magistrate felt bound to consider that the father was the support of the household, and that to sentence him to a longer term of imprisonment would be to sentence the wife and children to the workhouse. That would be just the sort of case in which a Court of Appeal could say whether or not the proper punishment had been inflicted under the particular circumstances, which cannot easily be foreseen beforehand or discovered afterwards except by actual evidence. Now, the condition of things is apparently this: There are two sections of people in the community who take different views as to the principle upon which punishment should be inflicted in cases of repeated offences. Some hold that punishment should be inflicted upon the principle of trying to reform the criminal; others that the injurious effect of the offence upon the State should alone be regarded, and that the offence should, consequently, be dealt with according to its gravity.

Now, these different views constitute, perhaps, a very fair subject for debate and for consideration by those who are responsible for inaugurating legislation upon the subject. I do not mean at all to say that the circumstances to which my noble and learned Friend has called attention are not such circumstances as may well make it appropriate and fit to consider and discuss that question. But that is not a matter which involves an inquiry in the sense which my noble and learned Friend suggests, either by a Royal Commission or any other tribunal of the kind. My Lords, the conclusion to which I have come, and I may speak on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, is that this is a subject which they are not under the necessity of inquiring into in that way, and, though it is a fit subject for them to consider, that there is no reason why they should seek further than they have already got materials for its consideration. In that sense my noble and learned Friend has undoubtedly made a case for inquiry by those who are charged with the responsibility of Government; but I certainly could not recommend that any inquiry, either of a character so vague as to necessarily remit the matter to your Lordships again for discussion, or so minute in regard to the circumstances under which sentences have been passed as to render it impossible that such an inquiry should ever come to an end, should take place. The circumstances connected with this subject are familiar to us all. I congratulate my noble and learned Friend upon the candour which he has exhibited in discussing this question. I am aware that it is sometimes thought that particular classes of Judges are more disposed than others to pass severe sentences. I believe that is an error, and that there is no such distinction between classes of judicial functionaries. There is a larger number of Chairmen of Quarter Sessions than of Magistrates, and that may be one reason why there are greater differences of opinion among them; but that there is any reason to suppose that Judges are disposed to pass too severe or too lenient sentences I do not believe. I regret that my noble and learned Friend should have apparently availed himself of the assistance of those who think it incumbent upon them to attack the Magistrates and Chairmen of Quarter Sessions. However, the subject to which he has drawn attention is important, and the Government will feel bound to consider it, with the desire of finding some mode of fixing a standard or principle of inflicting punishment upon offenders. But for that purpose they already have materials at their command, and therefore they cannot assent to the appointment of a Royal Commission.

*Lord COLERIDGE: My Lords, holding the office which I do, I think it is fit I should say a few words on the subject which my noble and learned Friend has brought before your Lordships' House to-night, and in the first place that our thanks are due to him for the manner in which he has brought it forward. As my noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack has said—and it is hard for me to dispute the wisdom of his conclusion, although he has said he does not see how he can accede to the prayer of the noble and learned Lord Herschell—none of us I think who have listened to this Debate will say that it is a purposeless Debate. And it certainly will not be without result, because the persons who are interested in and responsible for the administration of the Criminal Law cannot but be impressed by the fact that in your Lordships' House this has been thought a fit subject for grave consideration, and that the arguments of the advocates for two lines of punishment, so to speak, should have been presented to your Lordships for an almost judicial determination upon them. If I should venture to question anything in the speeches of my noble Friends it is the use of the term "principle," because I doubt very much whether those who administer the Criminal Law are conscious, at least to themselves, that they are administering it according to any elaborate or philosophical principle in every sentence which they pronounce. Speaking for myself, having thought a good deal about the matter and having a great many instances, present to my mind, I may say that when I pronounce sentence I do my best to pronounce it according to my judgment as the case before me appears to demand, and that no particular theory of one kind or another influences me, or is present to my mind, when I am inflicting punishment. I am compelled to inflict it for the particular offence for which the prisoner is being tried before me. But I must confess—as no man who has ever had to deal with this subject can deny—that there are different guiding thoughts present in the minds of persons who approach these matters. On the one hand, there are persons who, as I should be disposed to think, are inclined to magnify the importance of offences against property; and, on the other hand, there are men who may be inclined to think too little of offences against property and to magnify overmuch offences against the person and against life. That may well be when we consider that there are in the Courts over which I have the honour to preside 15 Judges, and as we are all, I trust, men of independent minds, it cannot be expected that in administering a complicated criminal system we should all proceed on exactly the same lines, and that a crime brought before one of my judicial brethren for adjudication and punishment will be regarded by that one Judge exactly as it would be regarded by my 14 colleagues. But I very much doubt whether anything like the principle which Lord Herschell has put forward is really advocated by any member of the Bench. Speaking for myself, I am afraid that I am perhaps an offender in disregarding repeated convictions if the offences have been what I should call peccadilloes rather than serious crimes. That is a tendency of my mind; yet I should never dream for one moment of acting upon any such fallacy as that prior convictions of the criminal are not to be taken into account in passing sentence upon him for even the most trivial matter imaginable. What I always feel is that one most important duty of a Judge is to take care that a sentence does not enlist the sympathy of the public on the side of the criminal, and that is always the result, at least there is always that tendency, where the sentence may fairly and reasonably be considered excessive. Sympathy is always in that case enlisted on the wrong side. What I have always felt is, though your Lordships are as competent to form a judgment upon it as myself, that if a Judge punishes with great severity even the twentieth peccadillo, what is he to do in the case of a really grave offence? I have known a woman to be sent to penal servitude for 15 years for stealing a shovel. It may be quite true that she had previously stolen 16 or 17 other shovels, and it may appear to some that that would justify the 15 years' penal servitude; but I do not think so, and nothing will ever persuade me that I ought to punish an offender such as that woman as I ought to punish a person who has inflicted gross and detestable cruelty on man, woman, or child. In cases like this the punishment and the offence are not correlative, and whenever there is an excess of punishment, the minds of intelligent men are set against the law instead of being enlisted on its side and against the criminal. If you inflict severe sentences for such offences the weapon breaks in your hand. There is only one other matter upon which I should like to say a few words. I rejoice to hear from my noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack that the question of establishing a Court of Criminal Appeal has, at all events, been considered by the Government; for I have long thought that the establishment of a Court of that kind would have a most powerful effect in promoting a greater uniformity of sentences. A steady course of decisions by a Court of Criminal Appeal, specially authorised to keep the administration of the law straight and uniform in these matters, and disregarding as it would all emotional feelings which tend to warp the judgment, would certainly, I believe, have that effect; for those who have the power of inflicting sentences would know that they were subject to revision. And, my Lords, I do not for a moment hesitate to accede frankly and entirely to the term which my noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack applied to such a tribunal, that it should be a tribunal at large. If there is to be a Court of Appeal it must have the power not only of reducing punishment, but of increasing inadequate sentences. I have no sentimental desire simply to diminish punishment; I desire to make it useful and in accordance with the righteous sentiment of the community, and I think, therefore, that a Court of Appeal should be left at liberty to diminish or increase sentences. There is one point upon which I think with regard to the difference in sentences, that perhaps there is less difference among Judges than appears at first sight. I am thinking now of two cases, accounts of which your Lordships may have seen in the papers, which seemed very much the same—one case where a man did kill his wife, and another case in which a man had attempted to do so. The two might look at first sight very much the same. One was a case of which I had personal cognisance, and though it was a most miserable case, in which a young man devotedly attached to his wife, had undoubtedly killed her, it was a case about as little removed from an accident as could make it a crime, and the man was very properly convicted and sentenced to a very slight punishment. In the other case, which had not ended in death, there had been a most deliberate and brutal attempt to murder an unfortunate woman, and it met with a very heavy punishment. Both cases were apparently very much the same, though one was punished lightly and the other severely. I give that as an instance upon which I ask your Lordships to believe that unless you really know the whole circumstances of a case, unless you are present at the trial and know the way in which the thing has been presented, you may be entirely misled in contrasting one case with another without a full knowledge of the circumstances. I will only add that I thank both my noble and learned Friends for the speeches they have made.

*Lord NORTON: My Lords, it may seem somewhat presumptuous in me to venture to add a few words to a debate which has been carried on by the highest legal authorities in this House; but as one who, during a long period, has constantly attended to legislation and administration on this subject, what I have to say may not be considered unworthy of attention. My noble and learned Friend Lord Herschell has asked for an inquiry into the principles which guide the decisions of our Judges in criminal cases in the hope of diminishing the present unequal incidence of punishments. I think a more important subject of inquiry would be the actual penal system itself, and the nature and degrees of the punishment. Nor do I think it would be useful to attempt to control the idiosyncracies of Judges. The punishments require to be more accurately adjusted. The Report of the Commission upon Criminal Law in 1834 laid great stress upon the law's uncertainty, arising out of the wide discretionary power given to Judges, and the want of definition. The variety in the administration of the penal system was said to spread the belief among offenders that severity of punishment depended upon accidental circumstances. In respect of secondary punishments, the Commissioners said what was wanted was a more constant legislative supervision of our system and greater discrimination in the infliction of sentences. What we want is not to limit the discretion of Judges, which is absolutely necessary and inevitable, but to give them better opportunities by our penal system to adapt punishment to particular cases which come before them, for it is impossible to formulate the infinite variety of circumstances of cases which come before our Judges at Assizes and before Quarter Sessions. In 1834, when that Report was made, there was no step in our penal system between death and transportation. I, myself, had some share in obtaining the first decisive vote of the House of Commons against transportation, when the conditions of colonisation and the state of our Colonies rendered it impracticable any longer, and I also served on the Committees which substituted the punishment of penal servitude. But I thought a great mistake was made by those Committees in measuring the terms of the new by the terms of the old punishment, there being nothing parallel between them, and there being no reason why a certain number of years of transportation should in any way be represented by a certain proportion of penal servitude. From that date to the present time, there have been a succession of Royal Commissions and Acts varying the terms of penal servitude. One Commission, after a panic from an increase of crime, immediately increased the term of penal servitude, as though that were certain to be a more effective punishment. From time to time changes were made under the Reports of those successive Commissions, and Acts of Parliament have been passed down to a very recent year varying the terms of penal servitude, and so ragged has the system become that at this moment there is a large gap between the maximum term of imprisonment (18 months) and the minimum term of penal servitude (five years) the intermediate terms having slipped out of our Statute Book. I am very glad to hear that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to re-introduce the minimum term of three years' penal servitude.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: The noble Lord is mistaken in supposing I said that. I did not say so.

LORD HERSCHELL: I do not think my noble and learned Friend said that; but I gathered that that was the case from what I understood to have been stated by the Home Secretary in the other House. I understood him to state that the Government proposed it.

*LORD NORTON: I thought that was stated by Lord Herschell. However, I hope it will be restored within an early date, as I believe that a term of three years' penal servitude is very much wanted. What is clear at the present moment, as has been stated by Official Authorities, is that the punishments of imprisonment and penal servitude have been identical. They are both carried out in the prisons of this country, and only differ in duration. There is, of course, some difference in treatment during the various periods of the punishment, but they are both carried out in the prisons of this country. What we have, therefore, to do is to make a proper graduation of prison punishment. The misfortune is that we are now practically reduced to this one sole form of punishment. I am glad to see that even an extension of my noble Friend Lord Milltown's Bill has passed a Second Reading in the other House, which shows that we are beginning to see that the abandonment of that most effective of all punishments—corporal punishment—was a mistake, and that we shall add to the effect of our penal system if we restore its infliction in suitable cases. Fines are by no means imposed as they might be, with a summary mode of recovering them. Sureties for good conduct might relieve the contents of our gaols, in lighter cases. We might in those ways, I think, improve a good deal what I may call the adaptation of our penal system to every variety of crime. The use of all these punishments must, of course, depend upon the principle observed in the administration of our system. The object of all punishment is to deter from a repetition of the offence. The Commissioners of 1863 lay that down as the true penal principle, and that punishment should be as severe as is consistent with the health of the prisoner, and should never be longer than is necessary to make it deterrent. Many of the cases which have been cited by my noble and learned Friend show that in the minds of learned Judges, and in the contemplation of Legislature too, the measure of severity is the length of the punishment. But it very often happens that the length of the term of punishment is a dilution of its severity, while frequently the shortness of the term is a means of more effective severity. Length of sentence has been advocated as a means of reforming prisoners under detention in prison; but I do not think that there can be a worse place for reforming a man's character, or improving his moral condition, than a prison, and we are falling into the double mistake, as it seems to me, of treating our prisons as reformatories, and reformatories as prisons. The only reforming of character in prison is by way of deterring the criminal from the repetition of his offence. You may educate a hypocrite in a cell, and you may damage the faculties of his mind, but you cannot train him for healthy life during detention in prison. Reform a man as much as you can while deterring him, but that must be the principal object of his imprisonment; the reformation is merely incidental. I do not hesitate to say that no punishment at all would be better than an undeterrent punishment. An undeterrent punishment is simply a useless infliction upon a man to the sacrifice of his wife and family and to the failure of his possible restoration to a useful position in the country. It is quite clear from the cases which my noble and learned Friend has cited that our present prison system is undeterrent. The number of re-commitments to every prison in the country shows that it is undeterrent. You may go through all our prisons and you will not find in the cells 1 case in 20 of a first conviction. There may be some causes of recommitments, which are external to inefficiency of imprisonment, but their recurrence 10 and 20 times proves the fact of undeterrence. The inquiry, then, must not only be as to our present administration of punishment, but into the nature of the punishments themselves and the rendering them more effective. The main thing to find out is how to restore our penal system to efficiency; not to guide our Judges in its administration, nor to form a cast-iron rule, which would leave Judges no discretion. A perfectly graduated scale of punishments would enable Judges to adapt their sentences to the nature of the offences brought before them for the purpose of deterring from their repetition. The latest Reports of both the Prison Commissioners and the Directors of Prisons, and now those two Bodies are the same, show, both in the case of local prisons and of convict prisons, a decrease of crime which has certainly gone on in recent years. People may be misled into supposing that that decrease has been caused by the efficiency of our punishments, and that that is a proof that there is no need for any change of system. I do not believe that at all; but that what has caused the decrease of crime has been improved habits of life, operation of reformatories in breaking up of haunts and nurseries of crime, and the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies throughout the Kingdom finding employment for prisoners on the completion of their punishment, and thus preventing their relapse into crime. I do not think we can attribute much of it to the efficiency of our present system.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I should not have said a word in this discussion had it not so chanced that in the year 1879 I was Chairman of a Commission for inquiry into the working of our system of penal servitude. Incidentally to that inquiry some of these questions were considered, and it might be as well that I should remind the House of what some of your Lordships may have forgotten has been the course of legislation upon one or two of these points. In 1863 a very important Commission was appointed on the working of the Penal Servitude Acts, and in consequence of the Report of that Commission the sentence of three years' penal servitude was done away with, the minimum term being fixed at five years. In all cases of second convictions the minimum term of penal servitude was raised to seven years. Then, as I have mentioned, I had the honour to preside over the Commission which was appointed in 1879, to inquire into our system of penal servitude. That Commission also incidentally considered the subject of criminal punishments generally. Acting upon the evidence which was given by the specialists, including some of the most experienced of Her Majesty's Judges who were called before the Commissioners, they recommended that the provision that there should be a minimum sentence of seven years on a second conviction should be repealed on the ground that it worked extremely ill, and that provision was accordingly abolished. The Commissioners at the same time recommended that the sentence of three years should not be restored, as they did not think that an adequate term of penal servitude. Without dwelling on those two points, I am quite satisfied that it was right to get rid of the second minimum sentence of seven years, for the obvious reason that Judges were in many cases put in a position which made it impossible to properly apportion their sentences. Either they must impose a sentence of penal servitude for seven years, which was too severe, or have recourse to a term of imprisonment for one year and a half, which was too light. That shows the extreme difficulty of the Legislature laying down specific laws upon this subject. You cannot possibly foresee what may be the shades of difference in particular cases, and it is, therefore, extremely dangerous to lay down special provisions as to maximum and minimum sentences. I would not say there are not arguments in favour of intermediate sentences between two years' imprisonment and five years' penal servitude. But the House should remember that the system has been tried, and the three years' penal servitude sentence has been condemned, on the ground that it left no margin for remission of punishment in consideration of good behaviour in prison; and without such a provision prison discipline is impossible. Then there is this consideration which has arisen since we made our Report. Undoubtedly, the fact that there is no sentence between 18 months and five years is an imperfection in our law; but I do not think it follows that that gap must be filled by a sentence of three years' penal servitude. No doubt there has been a great change in the prison system since 1864, all the prisons being now under the management of the Government. I gather from the Reports of the Prison Commissioners that the difference between the treatment of prisoners in penal servitude and in prison is a difference of name, and no longer a difference in principle, and that there has ceased to be that dividing line which formerly existed. It seems to me that it is a matter for consideration and inquiry as to whether some general change should not be made in the system, and whether some better system could not be devised. A sentence of penal servitude is looked upon now as marking a graver kind of crime, and it is a matter for consideration whether, if that distinction were broken down, it might not diminish the deterrent effect of the administration of the law upon criminals. Upon that point I will give no opinion; but I think the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has not given sufficient weight to the undoubted fact that some Judges and Chairmen of Quarter Sessions proceed upon the theory that long sentences should be imposed upon habitual offenders irrespective, to a great extent, of the nature of the offences, and others take into account only the particular offence which the criminal has committed. I cannot help feeling that that difference of opinion has proceeded too far, and that it has caused results so extraordinary in the differences between sentences pronounced that it is a matter which Her Majesty's Government should consider. I think it would be very worth while to consider whether some form of punishment could not be devised which could stand between the maximum of imprisonment and the minimum of penal servitude. I should certainly have thought it would have been possible to have brought that matter before a Commission; but, at all events, I hope Her Majesty's Government will give their best consideration to the points which have been raised.

*LORD MORRIS: My Lords, it is possible the House will not consider I am intruding unduly in this discussion, as I have had the opportunity of gaining some experience in regard to this subject from having filled the office which I held in the Sister Country, and having been engaged for many years in the administration of the Criminal Law in that part of the United Kingdom. That will, I think, plead my apology for intruding on the time and attention of the House. I shall certainly not inflict upon your Lordships a long speech, because I am of opinion, though we have heard a great deal of discussion as to whether long sentences are a deterrent punishment or not, that long speeches are certainly very often a great punishment; but they are not so often a punishment to those who deliver them, and perhaps the punishment does not fall upon the right persons. I think my noble and learned Friend opposite has done some good by ventilating this subject; but I do not think he can urge it further than as somewhat of an exercitation upon the subject, because the noble and learned Lord upon the Woolsack has stated that in his opinion, an opinion in which I take the liberty of saying I entirely concur, it is not a subject for inquiry before either a Committee or a Royal Commission. In this regard apparently two different sects have sprung up among the Judges of England, upon this question of criminal punishments, in which the prophets on either side can do what other prophets cannot, that is to say, they can ensure that their prophecies shall take effect, by the infliction of such sentences as they think fit within the maximum punishment prescribed by the Legislature. The matter has been dealt with somewhat as it appears to me as if it was left at large to any learned Judge, like an Eastern Cadi inflicting punishment and awarding as many strokes as he pleases to be given to anybody brought before him. But our Judges have to award within that which the Legislature has stated shall be the punishment. For each crime there is a maximum punishment allotted, and there is a natural elasticity left to the Judge for the exercise of his discretion. With regard to this matter of principle, as it is called, like a great many other matters of principle which we hear of nowadays, it is really a matter of detail. Judges like other people will take different views of the same state of facts. An offence which appears very grave to one Judge does not appear at all so grave to another. The idiosyncracies of one Judge can never be guaged by the feelings of other. On one occasion in Ireland I remember an effort was made to bring about an interchange of opinions among the Irish Judges. The Lord Chief Baron Pallas brought the subject before a meeting of the Irish Judges. He was anxious that some rough idea at least should be arrived at as to the gradations of punishment within the maximum which the law imposes. But he found that was impossible, nay, more, unreasonable, because a Judge should decide according to his own conscientious opinion, and not the opinion of someone else. and should, within the limit which the law allows him, inflict that which he considers an adequate punishment. It appears to me also that this is only the fringe of a much wider question, and I should much deprecate interfering with the larger question by dealing only with the fringe of it. It is only part of the larger question of the Criminal Code of this country. No less than 12 years ago, my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for India, then Home Secretary, issued a Commission to four of the most experienced Judges that could be put upon it—Lord Blackburn, Mr. Justice Lush, Mr. Justice Stephen, Lord Justice Barry—to report upon this subject, that Commission brought in a Report. It is now a matter of 12 years' standing, but nothing has been done upon it yet. That really is the matter to be dealt with, and it must be dealt with practically, because in a revised Code crimes would have to be defined in different classes to those in which they are placed at present. At present they are classed far too generally in their extent. Take, for instance, the crime of manslaughter; a manslaughter may be actually a murder, but a jury taking a merciful view of it will only bring in a verdict of manslaughter. Well, that crime dwindles down until you come to causing death by mere negligence, simply by carelessness in driving over somebody in the street. Nay, more, it might even reach a stage where there was no negligence, but where homicide had occurred by accident, the person committing it being engaged in some unlawful act of another character altogether. Well, the gradations of punishment are correlative. They range from penal servitude for life to a fine of 6d., or ordering a prisoner merely to be kept in custody until the evening, or letting him out altogether on his own recognisances. Punishments might be fixed for each sub-divided class of offences by which the responsibility of the Judge would be very much lessened; but I cannot, with great respect to my noble and learned Friend, see how any Commission or Committee of Inquiry could throw light upon the question as to the view which different Judges may take of the same state of facts, within the bounds which the law allows them by fixing a maximum punishment. Upon those grounds I am glad that the noble and learned Lord upon the Woolsack considers that the subject should be dealt with by Government, and not merely by the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry or a Commission.

Lord HERSCHELL: My Lords, I am, of course, very well satisfied that Her Majesty's Government themselves propose to enter upon the inquiry which I advocate, with the view to dealing with it hereafter. I trust that the result of that inquiry may be satisfactory, though I confess still to a doubt whether it would not be more advantageous to institute some other form of inquiry previous to the introduction of legislation. It has been said that there have been oscillations in the view which the Legislature has taken in the matter from time to time. If so, would it not be important to inquire what has been the practical result of the operation of those changes of system—whether crime has increased or decreased, and whether the number of prisoners returning after light sentences is greater or less? Surely, as a preliminary to any step towards legislation, it would be desirable to very carefully compare the results of those oscillations of view in different directions.

The Earl of NORTHBROOK: I do not know whether the noble Lord has a right of reply.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: Not upon a Motion.

Lord HERSCHELL: That is so; and in those circumstances I will merely express the hope that the Government will give the matter early attention, and that if no other inquiry is made than that by the Government themselves, they will, before proposing any legislation, favour the House with Returns or statistics as to the results of light sentences where they have been tried, in order to afford means of comparison between different places. It is of great importance that the House should be put in possession of such Returns, and if the Government do not lay them on the Table of the House I shall take an opportunity of moving for them at a future time.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till to-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 21st April, 1890.

Mr. Speaker's Indisposition,—The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to indisposition.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table; and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

QUESTIONS.

SCHOOLS IN LEWIS.

DR. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether complaints have reached him that under pressure from Mr. Robertson, Inspector of Schools in Lewis, the teacher of Lionel School, about a month ago, felt compelled to show Mr. Robertson all the telegrams, private or otherwise, which he had received since the 1st of January; and whether Mr. Robertson requires the services of an assistant to enable him to superintend the comparatively small number of schools in the island?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I have not been able to obtain the necessary information to enable me to reply to this question. I must, therefore, ask the hon. Gentleman to repeat the question on a later day.

THE SCOTCH PROCURATOR FISCAL.

DR. MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether any steps are being taken, or are intended to be taken, by the Government, to confine Procurator Fiscals in Scotland to their official duties as such, so as to put a stop to the present system of such public officials competing with ordinary solicitors for legal work in the Scotch Courts?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: As vacancies occur in these offices, the question of restriction to the official duties is always considered, and in recent cases they have been so restricted. Arrangements have also recently been completed by which the Procurator Fiscal at Lochmaddy has been restricted from private practice.

THE CROFTERS' HOLDINGS ACT.

DR. MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether crofting and fishery villages, built under the Scottish Fishery Village Act, come under "The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886"; whether Shieldaig, in the parish of Applecross, Rossshire, has been built under said Fishery Act; on what conditions or leases were houses generally built in such fishery villages, and to whom do or did the beaches in front of such villages belong; where are the plans, maps, charters, or other documents pertaining to such villages (Shieldaig especially) preserved, and how accessible; what restrictions and powers, if any, were put on or given to feu holders in such fishery villages, as to killing or taking of deer, game, and salmon, and have such restrictions and powers, if any, been subsequently repealed by the passing of Game Salmon Fishery or other Acts; and was property in such fishery villages (built under the Scottish Fishery Village Act) exempted from all or any parish or county taxes?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Presumably the hon. Member refers to the Acts relating to the British Fisheries Society, there being no Statute with the title given in the question. Crofters in properties held by this Society would, I think, come under the Crofters' Act if they were otherwise eligible under that Act. This, however, is a question for the Commission to settle. I am informed that Shieldaig never was one of the settlements of the Society, and that Pulteneytown is now the only village held by the Society, the other settlements having all been given up more than 50 years ago. The Acts above referred to empowered the Society to levy dues, &c. for harbours, but left the question of foreshores untouched. The conditions of building were similar to those in Feu Charters, except in the cases of houses in the landward part of any settlement, such houses (as was the case in Pulteneytown), were generally built by the Society, the tenants doing the carting. It is supposed that the plans, &c., were given up to the purchasers of the settlements. Those relating to Pulteneytown may be seen at the office of the Society at Wick. So far as I can ascertain no restrictions were imposed in regard to taking game, and in Pulteneytown no rights have ever been asserted. There is no exemption from taxes in Pulteneytown, and there is no reason to believe that any such exemption existed in the other settlements.

THE URRAY SPECIAL WATER AND DRAINAGE DISTRICT.

Dr. MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that the Public Works Loans Commissioners refused a loan to the Urray Special Water and Drainage District, after the granting of said loan had been recommended by the Board of Supervision, on the ground that sufficient security was not offered by the rates; and whether, in view of the recent decision of the Lord Ordinary that the whole parish is liable, they are now prepared to advance the money required?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I am aware that this loan was refused on the ground stated. No further application has been made to the Loans Commissioners. If the case is presented in any new aspect it will receive consideration.

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS COMMISSION.

Dr. MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the officer of the Fishery Board, on whose recommendation it was refused to grant a visit of the West Highland Commission to Portmahomack, resides in that district, or visited it to gain the required information, or conferred with the gentlemen who are actively pushing forward the proposed Portmahomack Railway, to hear their arguments in its favour, and generally discuss the "pros" and "cons" with them?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Portmahomack is in the Dornoch Frith, and so not within the scope of the inquiry of the West Highland Commission. The Report of the Fishery Officer referred to (which as a matter of fact was favourable to the views of those persons who petitioned in favour of this place) in no way influenced the refusal referred to in the question.

THE GRAND ORANGE LODGE OF BRITISH AMERICA.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state the provisions of a Bill "to incorporate the Grand Orange Lodge of British America," which has passed the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate by considerable majorities; and if it has received the assent of the Governor General of Canada?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Bill is primarily one for the object of providing educational assistance and charitable relief to such members of the Lodge as need it, and for the establishment of a benefit fund. The Governor General has been asked by telegraph whether he has assented to the Bill, but his reply has not yet been received.

IRELAND—Mr. SUB-COMMISSIONER BELL.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Bell, now a Sub-Commissioner engaged in fixing rents in the County Cavan, before his appointment, had acted as paid valuer for many landlords in that county; whether, since his appointment, Mr. Bell has acted as Sub-Commissioner in cases where the landlord was his former employer, and in one case, at Cootehill, fixed, as Sub-Commissioner, the rent of a farm which he had previously valued for the landlord; and whether, under the circumstances, Mr. Bell will be retained as a Sub-Commissioner in the County Cavan or elsewhere?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The Land Commissioners report that Mr. Bell was appointed to the Commission upwards of eight years ago, and that he has since been continuously engaged in the work of the Commission. He has kept no record whatever of any valuations he may have made prior to that appointment. He has no recollection of his having taken part, as a matter of fact, in fixing a rent on a holding which he had on a former occasion inspected for the landlord. The Commissioners see no reason why this gentleman should not be retained as an Assistant Commissioner.

CATHOLIC CHILDREN.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that from time to time during the last 16 years applications have been made to the Grand Jury of the County Cavan for contributions towards the maintenance of Catholic children from the county detained in Catholic Industrial Schools under "The Industrial Schools (Ireland) Act, 1868," and that, though the vast majority of cesspayers are Catholics, such applications have been persistently refused, on the alleged ground that a standing order prevented the Grand Jury from contributing to any industrial school; whether he is aware that since 1881 applications for similar contributions to Protestant industrial schools, made in the same statutory form and under similar circumstances, have every year been granted; whether such Protestant industrial schools were described as reformatories in the published Abstract of Presentments, in order to make it appear that the contribution was obligatory, and not, as in the case of industrial schools, voluntary; whether, in their Return to the Inspector of Industrial Schools in Ireland, made in respect of the year 1888, the Grand Jury reported that their contributions to industrial schools were *nil*, adding in a note "2s. 6d. for schools already on the books," although one of the Protestant schools to which a contribution was made during 1888 had not previously been on the books; whether the attention of the Auditor of the Local Government Board has been called to the matter; if his attention has been called to the statement of the Secretary to the Grand Jury to the Auditor, that the grant had been obtained by the Protestant industrial schools by false pretences, and if he can say on what foundation this accusation was made; and what action the Local Government Board propose to take to secure treatment for Catholic similar to that which has been accorded to Protestant schools?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The proceedings of Grand Juries not being under the control of the Executive Government, I am not in possession of detailed information on the subject of this question. It appears that the Grand Jury did, for a time, contribute to the funds of the Meath Protestant Male and Female Industrial Schools, but that at last Assizes they refused to continue the contribution. The Local Government Board have no control over Grand Juries in regard to their presentments.

THE IRISH LAND COURTS.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will give a Return showing the dates of the last sittings of the Land Courts in each county in Ireland, with the number of applications for judicial rents undisposed of in each county on 31st March, specifying how many of these applications are more than six months old?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Member will move for the Return it will be granted.

THE LAND PURCHASE ACT.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if, in view of his statement to the House on 21st July, 1887, that the equitable Clauses of the Land Bill then under consideration formed an "expeditious method of applying the principle of a sliding scale so as to obtain a temporary remission of rents until the purchase scheme can be carried," the Government propose the continuance of any such provisions in favour of tenants whose landlords decline to treat for the sale of their holdings under the Land Purchase Act?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The provisions of the Act of 1887 referred to were intended to meet a temporary necessity. The principle of a sliding scale for judicial rents would seem to have little connection with a scheme of land purchase.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL FOR IRELAND—SALE OF LIQUOR.

Mr. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government now intend to introduce a Local Government Bill for Ireland this Session; and, if so, whether such Bill will be upon similar lines to the Acts passed for England and Scotland, as intimated in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech, or if it will contain any provision for giving powers to Local Authorities to control the hours during which Exciseable liquors are sold in Ireland, or any such regulations?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The possibility of introducing a Local Government Bill for Ireland during the course of the Session must depend upon the progress of other Government business which at present stands before it. But, of course, the Government adheres to the intentions expressed on this subject in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech from the Throne. It is not usual to state the provisions of any Bill before it is read the first time; but no inconvenience can, I think, arise from my informing my hon. Friend that the Irish Bill would not differ from that passed for England and Scotland in respect of containing provisions for giving powers to Local Authorities to control the hours during which Excisable liquors are sold.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I assume it may be understood that the question of the introduction of the Bill is still an open one, and that it will be open for hon. Members to move provisions connected with legislation for the liquor traffic, and to take the sense of the House upon them.

*Mr. LEA: I beg to give notice that to-morrow—the Chief Secretary having informed the House that the Local Government Bill for Ireland to be introduced this Session, as intimated in the Speech from the Throne, will be upon similar lines as the Acts passed for England and Scotland, and will not contain any provisions giving Local Authorities power to control the hours during which the trade in Excisable liquors shall be carried on in Ireland, I will move that—

> "This House is of opinion that there is nothing to prevent it from proceeding further with legislation in relation to the control of and trade in Excisable liquors in Ireland, any previous Resolution of the House notwithstanding."

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): In connection with the Motion of which my hon. Friend has just given notice I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the promise which the Chief Secretary gave on February 1, 1889, with the authority of the Prime Minister, that the Government would do the best they could to facilitate the passing of the Bill of my hon. Friend, he will give facilities to-morrow night for the discussion of my hon. Friend's Motion?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I think I am not in a position to give facilities, much as I should wish it. I do not know that I have it in my power to do so; but I will inquire whether it is in the power of the Government to assist the hon. Gentleman to obtain a decision of the House upon this Motion.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in consequence of the decision of the House in favour of an Amendment of the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor) there was a difficulty in bringing on the Bill of my hon. Friend?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: There can be no doubt that a misunderstanding has arisen as to the effect of the Resolution to which the House came; but I may remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Government voted that the words "do not stand part of the Question." I should be glad, in view of the misapprehension, to do anything in my power to give the House an opportunity to proceed with the consideration of the Bill.

Mr. J. MORLEY: One word more. That is the reason why we are anxious that the Resolution of my hon. Friend should, if possible, come on to-morrow.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I can only repeat what I have said already.

THE LAND COMMISSION—KING'S COUNTY.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that in the King's County there are cases entered for hearing by the Land Commission since 1887 which have not been heard; and if he will cause these cases to be heard by the Commission; and, if necessary, appoint further Commissioners to relieve these applicants from the difficulties under which they suffer?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners report that the matter is as stated in the first paragraph of the question. A Sub-Commission has been sitting continuously in the King's County for upwards of six months, and the Commissioners have made arrangements to send another set of lay Assistant Commissioners into the county, which will be done at the earliest date practicable.

MR. MOLLOY: Already these cases are three years in arrear. When is it likely that the sub-Commissioners will visit King's County?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners say that the duties will be discharged at the earliest practicable opportunity. The arrears I am glad to say are diminishing, and I may remind the House that I was desirous of introducing a Bill dealing with them both last year and the year before.

MURDER OF A NATIVE OF INDIA.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has obtained or can obtain, any Report regarding the military aspects of the case in which a soldier named O'Hara and another were tried for the murder of a native, and the state of discipline disclosed at the trial in a cantonment in the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta, where a party of soldiers, after drinking in the canteen, broke out of barracks with their rifles and ammunition, and after various outrages in search of drink, mortally wounded a native who failed to supply them; and then, after spending some hours of a fine moonlight night plundering liquor, firing rifles in a wanton way, and conducting themselves in a drunken and outrageous manner, impressed a cart, and in that conveyance openly came home by the high road and re-entered barracks; whether he has observed that neither at the time did the Military Authorities interfere, nor for weeks after was anything done to identify the soldiers, and when, later, in response to an offer by the magistrate of pardon and reward one of the soldiers testified against the others, his evidence was so uncorroborated that eventually the High Court acquitted and discharged the accused, and justice has altogether failed; and whether, in communicating with the Military Authorities, the Secretary of State will inquire into the whole matter as a question of military discipline?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No Report has been received by the Secretary of State, but he will call for one from the Government of India.

DEATHS FROM ELECTRIC CURRENTS.

MR. JAMES (Gateshead): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any information has been received as to the number of deaths of recent years in the United States from electric currents from wires overhead or otherwise in the United States; and whether there would be any objection to lay this information before Parliament?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): No, Sir; the Board of Trade have received no official information as to the number of deaths from electric currents in the United States. I am, however, endeavouring to obtain information, and shall be happy to lay upon the Table of the House any that I receive.

EQUIPMENT OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

SIR HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what steps, if any, the Government propose to take to give practical effect to the vote of this House of the 13th March last, declaring that the necessary equipment required to make the Volunteers effective for service, in case of emergency, should be provided at the public expense; and what expectations he can hold out of those steps being taken at an early date?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already informed the House that it is the intention of the Government to give practical effect to the vote in question; but, pending certain inquiries, I think I had better postpone giving further details. But I propose to take action very shortly. If my hon. and gallant Friend puts a question to me on this subject in a week or a fortnight I may be able to answer him.

THE MENAI SUSPENSION BRIDGE.

Captain VERNEY (Bucks, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether it is the case that the woodwork of the roadway of the Menai Suspension Bridge, laid down about eight years ago, was constructed of unseasoned timber, and already shows signs of decay; whether it was surveyed by Mr. Baker in 1888, and reported as likely only to last five years longer; what was the total cost of relaying the roadway; whether the original timbers of the roadway lasted about 60 years, and were then found to be mostly sound; whether he will lay Mr. Baker's Report upon the Table of the House; and whether it is the case that the Menai Bridge tolls have been recently increased, so as to be in many cases double what they were a few months ago?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, University of Dublin): (1) The woodwork of the roadway laid down in 1878 is showing signs of decay—although it was supposed to have been constructed of "seasoned," though not "creosoted" timber. (2) The bridge was surveyed by Sir Benjamin Baker in 1888. He then reported that "the floor will not have a life of many years, but its condition is fairly good at the present time, and need cause no anxiety." (3) The precise cost of relaying the floor in 1878 is not on record, but it was about £5,000. (4) The previous floor seems to have been laid down in 1839. It was in a very unsound state when renewed in 1878. (5) There is no objection to laying Sir B. Baker's Report on the Table. (6) The rates of toll have not been recently increased; but the method of levying the toll has been altered, in a way which leads to more frequent payments of toll, and this practically amounts to an increase of the tolls. The change has been made by the Board's lessee, as he says, in his own defence, and entirely within his right.

THE YEOMANRY.

Mr. CORNWALLIS (Maidstone): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he intends to devote any portion of the sum of £150,000, that he is going to expend on the equipment of the Auxiliary Forces, towards the equipment of the Yeomanry?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: No, Sir. The fund in question is only granted for the purposes of the Volunteer Force.

WOOLLEN MANUFACTURE IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, at the Union between England and Scotland, the sum of £2,000 was set apart for the encouragement of woollen manufacturing in the shires of Scotland; whether he will consent to furnish a Report from those who administer the fund as to what has been done with it during the century; what is the present position of the fund, and by what authority has a part, if not the whole, of the fund been diverted from its original purpose; whether he will consent to a representative body, in touch with manufacturers, being appointed, who would administer the fund more successfully than a permanent Board in Edinburgh; and whether he will promise that, until the matter has been fully investigated, no step will be taken to dispense the fund in a different direction from what was originally intended?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have not yet received the requisite information on the subject to enable me to answer the question. I must ask my hon. Friend to postpone it.

Mr. THORBURN: I will put the question again on Monday next.

UNITED STATES TARIFF BILL.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government are now aware if the new Tariff Bill proposed by the Ways and Means Committee of the United States has been published; and, if so, whether he is in a position to state to the House the reductions proposed upon sugar and other articles of British production or manufacture imported into the United States?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Minister at Washington has reported by telegraph that the Tariff Bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on the 16th inst. The duty is taken off sugar, and a bounty of two cents per pound given on home produced sugar. Duties on wool and cutlery are increased. Her Majesty's Minister does not give the details, as they are too lengthy to telegraph; but he has forwarded them by mail, and they may be expected very shortly.

SEVERE SENTENCE.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, at the Leicester Quarter Sessions on the 10th inst., the Recorder sentenced Edward Dutton, who had been previously convicted of felony, to 10 years' penal servitude, to be followed by five years' police supervision, for stealing a set of firelrons; and whether he will consider this sentence with a view to mitigate its severity?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I observe from the Calendar that this man was convicted of receiving stolen goods and sentenced as stated. He had been three times previously convicted, and twice sentenced to long terms of penal servitude. No mitigating circumstances have been laid before me in this case. I am not in possession of any information which would justify me in interfering with the sentence.

THE RAILWAY ACCIDENT AT CARLISLE.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, considering the verdict returned at the Coroner's inquest upon the four passengers killed at Carlisle Citadel Station on 4th March, in which some of the jury unanimously expressed the opinion that—

> "The London and North-Western Railway Company incurred a very grave responsibility in using a brake of such an uncertain and unreliable character;"

and having regard to the fact that the driver of the train stated that it was the same pipe out of which a foot of ice was taken when his brake failed at Northampton last year when driving the same engine, he will refer the whole question of brake failures to a Departmental Committee of scientific and practical experts; and whether the Report of Colonel Rich upon this accident will be laid before the House?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Until I have received and had time to consider the Report of the Inspecting Officer appointed to inquire into the accident I am not in a position to make any statement. The Report will be ready in a few days, and I will at once present it to the House.

NONCONFORMIST CEMETERY AT NORTH KELSEY.

MR. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the inhabitants of North Kelsey, in Lincolnshire, a large majority of whom are Nonconformists, have by authority of a duly constituted Burial Board provided ground for a cemetery for the use of the parish; whether there is already ample provision in the parish churchyard for all the requirements of the members of the Established Church, but the Board have, nevertheless, set apart an adequate portion of their cemetery for the purpose of consecration, and have stated their willingness that it should be consecrated if the Bishop, Vicar, or members of the Established Church should desire that that ceremony should be performed; whether the Board have objected to apply to the Bishop for such consecration, and still object to incur what they believe to be the needless expense of consecration and church building; whether the unconsecrated portion is ready for use, but the Home Secretary has refused to allow it to be used, or to sanction the table of charges and fees, unless and until the Board apply for the consecrated portion; and whether it is the fact that many parishes in Lincolnshire have cemeteries in which no portion of the ground has been consecrated; and, if so, why and by what statutory authority the inhabitants of North Kelsey are compelled to undertake duties and expenditure from which others are exempt?

Mr. MATTHEWS: It is the fact that the inhabitants of North Kelsey, in Lincolnshire, have provided a burial ground. The parish churchyard has been closed by Order in Council, and there is no provision there for the requirements of members of the Established Church, nor can interments take place there except in vaults and walled graves existing at the date of the Order. The Burial Board are required by law to apply to the Bishop to consecrate a part of the ground. I have no power to waive this requirement, and proceedings by way of *mandamus* will be commenced forthwith. I am not aware whether there are other cemeteries in which no portion of the ground is consecrated. In cases where, as in Kelsey, an Order in Council has been made, the law makes certain requirements which it is my duty to enforce.

SCOTTISH BOUNDARIES COMMISSION.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that the Boundary Commissioners for Scotland, at their sitting held at Duns on the 14th ultimo, intimated that in their opinion they had no power to deal with the boundaries of counties except in the case of detached portions; and whether this intimation is in accordance with the provisions of Section 45 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, and with his own statements as to the powers and duties of the Boundary Commission made in the House of Commons on 8th April, 1889?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON was understood to say that he had not yet received the information that would enable him to answer the question.

THE PROBATE DUTY GRANT.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board if he will lay upon the Table of the House a statement showing the distribution of the Probate Duty grant during the financial year ending 31st March, 1890, and the amounts paid to each county during the same year in respect of Local Taxation Licences?

The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Long, Wilts, Devizes): The payments which up to the present time have been made to or on behalf of the Counties and County Boroughs in England and Wales, in respect of the financial year ended 31st March last, have been as follows: From Local Taxation Licences, £2,917,833; from Probate Duty, £1,668,779. Further payments will be made, which it is estimated will amount to £203,388; making together a total of £4,790,000. The Local Government Board will not be in a position to make the final payments until they have been informed by the Inland Revenue Commissioners of the actual amount received from the licences collected in the several Counties and County Boroughs, and the precise amount of the Probate Duty. Immediately that the final payments have been made, I shall be prepared to lay a statement on the Table of the House, giving the particulars desired.

CAMBRIDGE TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. CHARLES HALL (Cambridge, Chesterton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has now ascertained that the bankers who were stated in the local newspapers to be making arrangements for the transfer to their own bank of a large number of deposit accounts of the Cambridge Trustee Savings Bank were not Messrs. Mortlock and Co., but another firm?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): Yes, Sir; there has been a confusion which I regret. Messrs. Mortlock and Co. were not the bankers who attempted to arrange for the transfer to themselves of the deposit account of the savings bank in question. It was another firm, and an apology is due to Messrs. Mortlock and Co. for the mistake.

WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he proposes to re-introduce the promised Bill to carry out the recommendation of the Committee of this House as to certain workmen, entered before 4th June, 1870, in Woolwich Arsenal, being placed on the superannuation list; whether he is aware that some of the persons proposed to be benefited have died in poverty since the Committee reported; and whether, on account of its urgency, he will bring in a separate Bill to effect the object desired before Whitsuntide?

Colonel HUGHES (Woolwich): I also wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman when he will introduce a Bill to carry out the recommendation of the Select Committee of this House last Session, as to certain workmen at Woolwich Arsenal; whether such Bill will be a separate measure, and not connected with other clauses relating to the Civil Service; and whether the representatives of those who have died while the delay has arisen, will receive the amount which would have been payable to the deceased persons at the time of their deaths?

Mr. GOSCHEN: It was intended to include the case of the Woolwich Arsenal workmen in a general Superannuation Bill. But looking to the time which such a Bill may take in passing, the Government have decided to deal with the question of Arsenal workmen in a separate measure. I must, however, ask the hon. and gallant Member for Woolwich to defer his further question till the Bill is introduced.

Colonel HUGHES: Will the Bill be introduced before Whitsuntide?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; within a few days.

Colonel HUGHES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state approximately the number of labourers employed in the Ordnance Store Department of the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, and how many of those earn 17s. a week, and how many 18s. and 19s. respectively?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: By the latest Return there were 992 labourers in the Ordnance Store Department at Woolwich, of whom 318 are on 17s. a week, 345 on 18s. a week, and 200 on 19s. a week, besides 87 at £1 a week, and 42 at 25s. a week.

VACCINATION RETURNS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the case of the Return "Vaccination Acts (Persons Imprisoned, &c.)," he can now state the extent of the omissions from that Return; and if he will state what steps the Government propose to take to enforce the Order of the House of the 8th August, 1889?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The only omission of which I am aware is that of certain portions of the County of Middlesex, and of the Borough of Banbury. By a printer's error Merionethshire has been printed Monmouthshire. A new edition of the Return is about to be issued, and these errors will be corrected. The hon. Member will find the Return for Hampshire and Brecknockshire under Southampton and Breconshire respectively.

COMPLAINTS OF PRISON CLERKS.

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Departmental Committee upon which the Treasury is represented, appointed in 1886 to inquire into the complaints of the clerks in Her Majesty's prisons, is still sitting; and, if they have concluded their labours, whether he will inform the House of the result of their inquiry?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question for a few days. I have not yet been able to obtain the information.

WANDSWORTH POLICE COURT.

Mr. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when it is intended to commence the erection of the new Police Court in Battersea?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Office of Works that the plans for the Wandsworth new police court are almost ready. A sum of £5,000 is included in the Estimate for this financial year, and the Office of Works will commence the work about August, so as not to incur a greater expenditure than has been allotted for the purposes of this court.

POSTAGE OF TRADE CIRCULARS.

Mr. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that British merchants and manufacturers, by posting their trade circulars and specimens of manufactures abroad, are at liberty to make use of unfastened envelopes in place of inconvenient wrappers, which they are compelled to use if posted in the United Kingdom; and whether the postage of

½d. or its equivalent is lost to this country; and, if so, whether, in the interest of the Revenue of the kingdom and for the convenience of British traders, he will cause this inequality to be removed?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, University of Cambridge): I am aware that some persons post their circulars, prospectuses, &c., abroad in order that they may use for covers unfastened envelopes which are not permitted for Book Post matter posted in this country. I am at the present moment considering whether the Book Post rules can properly be modified in this and some other respects.

ARTIZANS' AND LABOURERS' DWELLINGS.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board whether he can inform the House when he will introduce the measure, promised by the Government, for consolidating and amending the Acts relating to artizans' and labourers' dwellings?

Mr. LONG: I am not in a position to state when I shall be able to introduce the Bills referred to. I may say, however, that I do not anticipate any considerable delay.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS.

Mr. HOWELL: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state to the House when he will introduce his Bill dealing with Trustee Savings Banks?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I hope to be able to introduce the Bill on Thursday.

PUBLIC STEAM LAUNDRIES.

Mr. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the provisions of "The Factories and Workshops Act, 1878" (41 Vic, c. 16), have any application to public steam laundries; and, if not, if there is any reason why persons employed in public steam laundries should not receive the same amount of protection as is given to persons employed in factories and workshops to which the Act of 1178 applies.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The question of including laundries in the Factory Act of 1878 was carefully considered at the time of the passing of that Act. The trade strongly resisted the proposal, on the ground that so much of the work was required to be done without delay, that any limitation of the hours of work would be impracticable. A concession was accordingly made to the necessities of the trade, and laundries were not included in the Act, regard being had to the fact that children and young persons are not employed in laundries.

THE WELSH SUNDAY CLOSING COMMISSION.

Mr. ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what action the Government purpose taking on the Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the operation of "The Sunday Closing (Wales) Act, 1881?"

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government have considered the Report; but the hon. Gentleman will not, I think, be surprised to hear that we do not propose to recommend Parliament to take any step upon it at an early date. Having regard to the amount of business now before the House, we should hardly be justified in introducing a measure for dealing with Sunday Closing in Wales this Session.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to recommend that a vote of thanks should be passed to the Commissioners for their impartial conduct?

[No reply.]

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY BILL.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now fix a day for the Second Reading of the Employers' Liability Bill; and, if not, whether he can mention a date before which the Second Reading will not be taken?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: We shall not ask the House to read the Bill a second time in the course of the next week. That is all I can say at present.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): As the Bill is likely to give rise to considerable debate will it be taken as the first Order, or practically so?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am sure the hon. Gentleman will see that it is very undesirable I should make any positive engagement of that character. Having regard to the importance of the measure, it is desirable that it should receive full discussion.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS: May I ask if it will not be proceeded with before the Land Purchase Bill is disposed of?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Certainly not.

ST. AUGUSTINE SCHOOL AT KILBURN.

Mr. CHANNING: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education how long the St. Augustine School at Kilburn has been in receipt of grants as an elementary school; what has been the total income of this school from fees, from Parliamentary grants, and from subscriptions during the last six years; and whether any, and, if so, what, part of the income of this school during the last six years has been applied to building extensions in St. Augustine's or in other public elementary schools?

*The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir W. Hart Dyke, Kent, Dartford): The school in question has been in receipt of grants for 15 years. The hon. Member will be able to gather the amount of these grants during the last six years from the Appendix to the Department's Annual Report. It would be an inconvenient precedent if the Department were asked to furnish anything further; but, so far as the information at my disposal goes, there is nothing to justify the assumption that the income of the schools is in excess of their own requirements, or that any part of it is devoted to purposes foreign to their maintenance.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether clerks of the Second Division, who, under Clause 12 of the Order in Council, dated 21st March, 1890, are eligible for promotion to the First Division after eight years' service, will receive the scale of pay fixed for the third stage of the First Division by the Royal Commission and approved of by the Treasury Minute, dated 10th August, 1889, namely, £200 to £500 by annual increments of £20; and whether it is intended to put into practice the "marking time" provisions of the Treasury Minute, dated 31st October, 1889, so as to defer the benefits accruing in proportion to length of service?

Mr. GOSCHEN: There is no intention of departing from the Treasury Minute of August 10, which laid down that the scale of salary recommended by the Royal Commission for the Higher Division should only be regarded as a maximum, and that the present varying scales should be, at any rate, temporarily maintained. A clerk of the Second Division appointed to the Higher Division will, therefore, not be necessarily placed upon a general scale of salary rising from £200 to £500, but will be placed upon the scale of salary obtaining in the Department in which he may be promoted. The Minute of October 31, 1889, will be modified on the lines of the principle adopted in the recent Order in Council.

SUPPRESSION OF PUBLIC HOUSES.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is the intention of the Government that in the purchase of public houses in order to suppress them the owners should receive not only the structural value and compensation for disturbance of business, but the monopoly value of the licence created by the same restrictions which have been already placed on the issue of new licences?

Mr. GOSCHEN: In view of the confusion which might unavoidably arise from answering questions on this subject across the Table of the House, I must ask the hon. Member to postpone his question till the Bill is introduced.

DELAGOA BAY.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state if any steps have been taken by the Government to protect British interests at Delagoa Bay, especially with regard to the interests involved in the railway; whether he can give the House any further information in reference to the reported invasion of the Shiré Country, and whether any actual invasion occurred; whether he can state the amount of loans made by the British Government to Portugal; and if the British Government have ever renounced their claim to repayment?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: (1.) Her Majesty's Government are making representations to the Portuguese Government, concurrently with that of the United States, respecting the British interests concerned in the Delagoa Bay Railway. We are not aware that there are other British interests there requiring protection at present. (2.) No further information has been received to that which I have already communicated to the House, viz., that the Portuguese Government know of no intended expedition into the Shiré Country, but have instructed the Governor General of Mozambique by telegraph to send immediate orders to their officers to retire below the Ruo if they have advanced above it, and they assure us that no action of the Colonial Authorities will be sanctioned or tolerated that is inconsistent with the understanding between the two Governments. (3.) A loan of £600,000 was made by this country to Portugal in 1809; but by the Treaty of 22nd January, 1815; whereby Portugal agreed to abolish the Slave Trade, the Convention of that loan was annulled and further payments declared to be remitted. By an examination of accounts in the same year it was shown that a balance of £2,489,240 was due by Portugal on account of arms and other supplies furnished by this country during the war between 1808 and 1814. This has not been repaid or formally remitted. The reason for not claiming it doubtless was that the war was waged rather on behalf of Europe than of Portugal.

THE NEW EDUCATION CODE.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will undertake that the new Education Code shall not come into force until the House has had a full opportunity of discussing it and amending it if thought desirable; and whether he can fix a day for the discussion?

Sir W. HART DYKE: If my hon. Friend will refer to the Minute prefixed to the Code he will see that it will not come into force until the House has had full opportunity for discussing it. I am not yet in a position to name a day for the discussion; but I promise that due notice shall be given.

SWAZILAND.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can inform the House what is the proportion between the numbers of the subjects of Great Britain and of the South African Republic in Swaziland; whether, in case of native or other disturbances, it would be possible to send troops to Swaziland without violating the territory of neutral nationalities; and what is the distance between the boundary of British territory and Swaziland?

Baron H. de WORMS: The correct numbers cannot be stated with precision, as many of the whites interested in Swaziland are not permanently resident there. The permanent residents appear to be chiefly British subjects; but the subjects of the South African Republic and the sympathisers with it, being principally concessionaires and holders of grazing rights, represent, roughly speaking, 3 to 1 of other nationalities. It would be possible to send troops to Swaziland without passing through the territory of more than one independent native chief, Zambana, who desires British protection; but the route would be a bad one. The portion of Zambana's territory which intervenes between the boundary of British territory in Zululand and the boundary of Swaziland is at its narrowest part, perhaps, 10 miles wide; but, as I have indicated, the approach to Swaziland on this side would be circuitous and unhealthy.

CONVICTION ON PERJURED EVIDENCE.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if any compensation is to be made to the four men who were falsely imprisoned on perjured evidence for a supposed theft on a public-house in Whitechapel; whether, now that they have been released, the conduct of Sergeant Adams in reference to the case has been inquired into; and, if not, can he explain on what grounds?

MR. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; it is not the intention of the Government to offer compensation to these four men. In the case of two of them, the punishment has been remitted, not because their innocence has been established, but because their identification seemed open to doubt. With regard to Hyde and Whaley, the Government cannot be held responsible for their wrongful conviction. It was due, in the first place, to the perjury of a witness, who has since been prosecuted at the instance of the Government and convicted; and, in the second place, to their own conduct, and to their failure to produce the evidence which the Public Prosecutor has since brought forward and by which the perjury was established. Full inquiry has been made into the conduct of Sergeant Adams. Inasmuch as he destroyed after the trial certain notes, he is held by the Chief Commissioner to have acted imprudently, and to be deserving of censure; but in other respects I am satisfied that he acted without *mala fides*, and in the manner which he thought best under the circumstances.

PRIVATE UNDERWRITERS.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, in view of the heavy premium charged by private underwriters, he has now considered the advantage which would accrue by the risk in connection with the transit of scrip, bonds, &c., being undertaken by the Department, charging a moderate rate?

*MR. RAIKES: Scrip and bonds can be sent as registered letters, and in the event of their loss compensation is given up to a maximum of £5 when the usual postage has been prepaid. Subject to the prepayment of an additional fee of 2d., as an insurance fee, compensation is given up to a maximum of £10. A proposal has been made to raise the limit of compensation from £10 to a much higher sum, and I hope soon to be able to arrive at a decision in the matter.

THE LIQUOR TRADE AND COMPENSATION.

SIR W. LAWSON: I wish to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is correctly reported to have said at Bristol that—

> "The brewer and the publican may surely not feel dissatisfied at the important recognition of the principle of compensation for licences taken away without any default of their holders;"

and, if so, whether this statement is to be understood to mean that the Government intend by their proposal to give an increased value to licensed houses?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I think that the hon. Member has accurately quoted the purport of my observations, but I cannot accept the inference he has drawn from them. In my opinion fair compensation will not give increased value, but protection against possible injustice.

GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

Return ordered—

"Of the number of ounces of gold and silver plate upon which duty was paid at each of the Goldsmiths' Halls in London, Birmingham, Chester, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin, in each year from 1887-8, inclusive, and of the number of ounces upon which drawback has been allowed in each of those years; showing also the number of ounces of gold and silver plate hall-marked under the voluntary system of hall-marking articles not subject to duty, and the number of gold and silver watch cases which have been hall-marked, distinguishing those which are British from those which are foreign (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 348, of Session 1887).—(*Mr. Kimber.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 199.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

(4.15.) MR. PARNELL (Cork): Mr. Deputy Speaker, however we may differ as to the propriety of the proposals made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in the Bill now under consideration, we, as Irish Members, are at least entitled to congratulate ourselves upon the position which the Irish land question has now attained, as acknowledged by the introduction of the Bill. A Bill for establishing an occupying ownership in Ireland, of however limited and insufficient a character, demonstrates the justice of the claim that we made nine years ago by the establishment of the Land League, that such an ownership ought to be established. The right hon. gentleman also, in the provisions of his Bill, admits the justice of the main contention we then made, and which we make to-day, that the rents of the Irish tenants are too high. And so far as those two admissions go, we welcome the right hon. gentleman as our most recent recruit and disciple. The Irish land question, after nine years of strenuous exertion on the part of Parliament to settle it, still remains in need of settlement. According to the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, it is just that the Irish tenants should have a reduction of 20 per cent. in their rents. There are two ways in which the question might be settled: one by the reduction of the rents by the action of the Courts without purchase—by the reduction of 20 per cent., which the right hon. Gentleman admits the necessity of; the other is the way which he has chosen, the system of compensating the landlord for his interest in the land by payment, and making the former tenant the owner in his place. We have to consider the question of ways and means in considering the sufficiency of the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. We ourselves would prefer the solution by the Courts—at all events, as a preliminary to land purchase—the reduction of the rent of the tenant to the level suggested by the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, before we came to the English taxpayers for a loan on their credit. We have introduced Bills into this Parliament, Session after Session, for the purpose of carrying out this offer, and our proposals were invariably defeated. We are, therefore, compelled to return to the solution the right hon. Gentleman has attempted in this Bill, and we are met at the threshold of our inquiry by these questions — Is it a sufficient measure? How far will it reach? And how far will the Imperial taxpayer go in the direction of loaning British credit to the Irish landowner? The example of the Bill presented by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, in 1886, shows us that he will not go very far in that direction; it shows us that the amount of the credit will have to be very limited, and that the taxpayer will not consent to extend the loan of his credit to an amount sufficient to settle this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant has recognised the fact in his land purchase scheme, and he has limited the amount of the credit to £33,000,000, or, taking the £10,000,000 already spent, to £43,000,000. He has also seized upon certain local funds in Ireland devoted to other and most necessary purposes in order to diminish the risk that the Imperial taxpayer will ever be called upon to meet. But in so doing the right hon. Gentleman has destroyed his solution of the question. He presents his Bill to us, not as a measure to settle the Irish land question—if he claims that it is a measure to settle the Irish land question, I shall be abundantly able to show that he is not—he presents it to us not as a measure for the solution of the Irish Land Question, but as a proposal for enabling about one-ninth or one-tenth of the larger and absentee owners to get out of the country at an exorbitant price, leaving their smaller resident brethren in the lurch. He presents his Bill to us, not as a proposal for the purpose of making 600,000 Irish tenant-farmers owners of their holdings, but as a proposal for making one out of every four tenants owners of their holdings. I object to this Bill because it does not carry out what it pretends to carry out, while it exhausts the only Irish credit available for the purpose, by inducing the English taxpayer to loan us his credit for the solution of this great question. I think, and I always have thought, that we might reasonably ask, in view of the history of the Land Question, in view of the fact that the Imperial taxpayer is the descendant of the men who placed these landlords in Ireland for the purpose of perpetuating and securing English rule in that country, and that the presence of those landlords has been the source of untold misery, calamity, and suffering to Ireland, and has resulted in what is now known as the Irish Land Question—I think that under these circumstances Irish landowners and Irish tenants are entitled to expect that, to some extent, the English taxpayer will help us in arriving at a solution. But I object to the right hon. Gentleman running off, in company with these absentee owners, with the only kind of credit we have, and, for the purpose of protecting and inducing the taxpayer to help us, exhausting our resources for the solution of this question, and yet leaving three-fourths of it unsettled. By the way, in passing, I wish to notice that I think the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt unwittingly, has mis-described the extent of his resources, and exaggerated, by some millions, the amount of the funds available. He told the House that the capitalised value of the cash and contingent portion of the fund would be £33,000,000, whereas it is only £26,000,000. It is only by seizing upon the £118,000 surplus of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Chief Secretary has been able to bring the capitalised value up to £29,100,000, which is 3,500,000 short of his original estimate.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): When I gave the estimate I necessarily formed it without consulting the Departments concerned, and perhaps it will be more convenient if the hon. Gentleman will take the figures from the Return which I have furnished to the House.

MR. PARNELL: I have calculated the figures from the Bill, and also from the Return. I will take the figures from the Return at £30,000,000, and if we take the £10,000,000 already spent, it will bring the amount up to £40,000,000. I will now say that the Bill is unfair to the resident Irish landowners. I state that briefly now, as one of my objections to the Bill, and I will return to it a little later on. Out of every four tenants you will leave three still paying their original un-reduced rent, and you set up for their example a neighbour who pays his rent, less 20 per cent. reduction, under the operation of this Bill. You take, as I have said, one-ninth of the Irish landowners, and you buy them out, and, as I shall be able to show, you have, to a large extent, selected the richer and absentee landlords. My next objection to the measure is that it exhausts our local credit without our consent, and that you neglect to avail yourselves of the only means under which such absence of consent from the majority of the Irish Members would be excusable, by neglecting to provide any local control in the application of this money. My fourth reason against the Bill is, that so long as coercion exists in Ireland, and is used, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary uses it, to prevent the legitimate combination of the Irish tenantry, the tenant does not stand on an equal footing in making his bargain with the landlord, and will be compelled, by the existence of arrears and the existence of coercion, to give an exaggerated and exorbitant price for his holding. My fifth objection to the measure is, that it makes no suitable provision for the congested districts. I shall show precisely the mode in which the right hon. Gentleman's proposals for relieving the congested districts are insufficient and illusory to the last degree. My final objection is, that the Bill is unfair to the Imperial taxpayer, and that the guarantees are illusory, insufficient, and valueless. I shall naturally be asked whether, after these criticisms on the Government measure, I have no counter proposal to make, or whether I devote all my energies to pulling down and destroying the work of the right hon. Gentleman, without having anything to substitute in its place. I think such a question might reasonably be asked me, and I shall answer it briefly by saying that at the close of my argument against the measure I propose to explain my own proposals. I have thought for many years over the solution of this question. One's opinion must change and modify from year to year by common experience; but what I have to suggest to-day is a solution that suggested itself to my mind so long ago as 1881, on the introduction of the Irish Land Bill. The years that have gone by since then, and the proposals in the direction of land purchase made by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, in 1886, and the attitude of English public opinion to-day, have convinced me that if you refuse to further protect the improvements of the tenants from confiscation by the infliction of rent, if you do not adopt that method, then the only solution is the proposal that I have made—that is the only alternative. And now I come to the question of the insufficiency of the Bill. This land question is not so large a question as many will suppose. You make it a large question, I admit, by the method of purchase proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. If you adopt that method of purchase it must be made a large question, because a landlord selling his estate will not readily part with a portion of it, and retain another portion, but in reality the area, if I may be allowed the expression, of the land question is much more limited than would be supposed by the figures of the working of the Land Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1888. In looking at this question it is reasonable for us to consider what it is that has created the idea of looking for a solution of it. It is the trouble which has arisen in Ireland between the average sized tenancies and the smaller class of tenants and their landlords. The trouble has not been created, as a rule, by the larger class of tenants. The larger class of tenants, I have always thought, can be fairly protected under the operation of the Land Act of 1881 and the Amending Act of 1887 admitting the leaseholders. They stand on a much more equal footing with their landlords to make their contracts freely and fairly, and it is not, in my judgment, necessary for the sake of settling the Irish land question that you should include the class of tenants above £50 valuation in any Purchase Bill. Certainly it is not necessary you should include the cost of large grazing tenants, many of whom occupy farms of from 500 to 2,000 acres. But under the operation of the existing Land Purchase Acts you are obliged to buy up the landlord's whole estate, grazing land, congested farms, large tenancies, and average agricultural tenancies. The only limitation proposed is that the Commissioners shall not advance more than £5,000 for any one estate. That is a pretty big sum to advance to any one tenant for the purpose of settling the Irish land question. My contention is, that it is not at all necessary to go beyond £50, or, if you like, £70. The limitation of £50 was the one adopted by the Arrears Act, and it worked fairly well, that Act being the most satisfactory that has ever been passed by the Imperial Legislature for the relief of Irish agricultural industry. In Ulster the situation is considerably different from that which exists in the other three provinces. The north of Ireland was protected at all times by the Ulster custom. The landlord could not, in that province, carry out the extensive clearances which were effected, to some extent in Leinster, to a considerable extent in Munster, and to an enormous and frightful extent in Connaught. The situation in Ulster may, therefore, be described as normal from the point of view of land purchase. If you come to Leinster, however, you find the situation entirely different. There you find that clearances have proceeded to a great extent, and that you have to deal with very large holdings and some considerable tracts of grazing land. In Munster you have also a mixed condition of large holdings, and a still larger area of grazing land than you have in Leinster, while in Connaught the whole area of the country has been turned into one vast grazing district, the small tenants subsisting upon the mountains and hills, and in the swamps, on land which they have reclaimed from rock and waste, and occupying holdings of a most miserable and impoverished kind. It comes to this—that the area which is now occupied by tenants above £50 valuation has, so far as I can calculate from the imperfect Returns, absorbed 45 per cent. of the whole purchase money advanced. Now the right hon. Gentleman is going to buy up whole estates. If you buy at all, as I have admitted, you must buy on the whole estate if you proceed on the principle of purchase, because it is not reasonable to expect a landlord to sell only a portion and to retain what you do not want, and, certainly, the absentee landowners have objected to this. But if you proceed upon that principle your £40,000,000 becomes ludicrously inadequate. There are in Ireland, under the system adopted in the working of the existing Acts, 14,000,000 statute acres of land, which will have to be dealt with if you proceed on the principle of buying up whole estates. The Poor Law tenement valuation of these 14.000,000 acres is about £9,000,000. According to the Returns which have been presented to us, an average of 18½ years' purchase of the Poor Law tenement valuation has been given under the sales already effected. If you multiply 18½ by 9, you have a sum total of £166,500,000 as the amount necessary to be provided for a solution on the lines proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. But the right hon. Gentleman exhausts our resources after an expenditure of £40,000,000, and he leaves three-fourths of the question untouched; he shuts the door in the face of three-fourths of the Irish tenants, who will receive no reduction, and leaves nine-tenths of the Irish landowners with no prospect before them except continuous strife with their tenants in the attempt to obtain for themselves the favourable position of the minority who have purchased. I have said something about the character of the sales. There, again, I have to complain of the want of information. The ingenuity of the officials in Dublin, and here in the Irish Office, ought to have been exhausted to supply full information from every point of view in reference to the working of the Land Purchase Acts, but the information we have had is of the most meagre description, and leaves many most important matters in the dark. According to the Returns laid before Parliament, giving an account of sales up to December 31, 1888, I find that 530 owners of land sold their estates to their tenants, at an expenditure amounting to £3,792,000. Of these 530 owners, 34 walked off with £2,251,000, or six out of every 100 owners who sold got away with 57 per cent. of the whole amount of the purchase money. I will read out the names to the House, and the amounts they absconded with; they are very instructive. If the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh finds these owners fighting with him in "the last ditch," this may probably account for it. I will give the amounts in round numbers. They have had a good deal more than these sums, but these are up to the end of 1888. The Duke of Abercorn has received, in round numbers, £267,000; Sir Victor E. Brooke, £83,000; Sir Thomas Lennard, £108,000; the Salters' Company, £230,000; the Fishmongers' Company, £118,000; the Skinners' Company, £103,000; The Marquess of Waterford, £124,000; the Marquess of Bath, £290,000; Mr. George Lane Fox, £67,000; the Duke of Leinster, £434,000; the Earl of Normanton, £34.000; Lord Ashbourne, £10,000—we will not begrudge that modest amount to the author of the Act; Mr. Anthony Strong Hussey, £63,000; Earl Stanhope, £39,000; Lord Castletown, £49,000; Lord Kilmaine, £53,000; and Lord Ardilaun, £38,000. There are others, making altogether 34 in number, mainly Peers and persons of title, who form 6 per cent. of the total number of landlords whose estates have been brought under the Act, who have walked off with 57 per cent. of the whole sum paid under that Act. Nine of these have taken £1,500,000, or 42 per cent. of the whole. If you are going to carry out the provisions of this Bill as you have done those of the Act, by the time you have spent your £40,000,000, 400 out of the 10,000 Irish landowners will walk off £24,000,000 out of the whole £40,000,000. That is not the way in which we should like to see the Irish Land Question settled. We do not want to exterminate the Irish resident landowners. We have never felt any ill-will to them individually. We have persecuted and have successfully abolished the system. But with the power of these landowners—many of them the victims of circumstances, I admit—to oppress and rack rent their tenants abolished, and with a suitable solution of the land question, we should gladly welcome their presence in Ireland; we should gladly see them taking the part for which they are so well fitted in the future social regeneration of the country, in the future direction of affairs, and in the future national life of the country. We do not desire that their interests should be sacrificed for the sake of the absentee landowners. If there is one particular in which the Bill distinguishes itself more than another, it is in the utter unscrupulousness with which it throws overboard the Irish resident landowners, and leaves their future to be utterly destroyed and ruined. Let us examine the position of the smaller Irish landowner. His estate is heavily mortgaged, but he has an income remaining after paying all his annual liabilities. He occupies a portion of his land himself, and the remainder is let to tenants, with whom he is at perpetual war with reference to a reduction, which they demand, of from 20 to 30 per cent. You advise him to sell and to take 20 years' purchase of his net rental. I will take the example of the right hon. Gentleman, and assume the estate to have a net annual value of £100 a year. The right hon. Gentleman proposes that the estate shall be purchased at £2,000, that the tenant shall pay £80 per annum instead of his original rent of £100, and we will suppose that there are encumbrances on the estate amounting to £1,000, which will have to be paid off, leaving £1,000 clear. The owner will receive Stock bearing 2¾ per cent. interest, which will give him an income of £27 10s., instead of his original income of £40; in other words, he will sustain a loss of 32 per cent. The Bill will leave the normal class of Irish landlords untouched, and it will leave three-fourths of the Irish tenants untouched. It will set up a standard of rent throughout the country in respect of the fourth which it deals with, and the result will be to create an agitation on the part of the other three-fourths for a similar reduction of their rents. How are you going to meet that agitation? You have admitted in your measure that the rent must be reduced by 20 per cent. in respect of the one-fourth of the Irish tenantry. You do not select these tenants because they are the most rack-rented. As far as we know, the most solvent tenants will be the fortunate purchasers of their holdings, and you say to the remainder, "You must still pay your old rents." You will be obliged to meet such a situation as that, and the only way will be by an amendment of the improvement clauses of the Land Act of 1881, or an extended measure of land purchase, involving £126,000,000, making a total of £166,000,000. Then, let us consider the situation in which we find ourselves as Irish representatives in regard to this demand for the hypothecation of these funds for local purposes. I do not understand how the right hon. Gentleman has the face to come to Parliament with such a proposal as that, without accompanying it by some provision for local control over the application of these funds. What is the use of talking of Local Government for Ireland when you appropriate, without our consent, the very funds you hand over to the Local Authorities in England to be dealt with as they please? Where is the consistency of such a proposal? Either it is right that the Local Authorities in England should have control over these funds or it is wrong. If it is right in England, surely it is right in Ireland. These services in Ireland, which you propose to deprive of these funds, are badly enough off already. The National School teachers are miserably underpaid, and the provision for the medical comforts of the poor, which is the principal matter which is provided for by the grants of Parliament in aid of the Poor Law relief, is a matter of the most vital importance to the poor. But you say to the three-fourths of the tenants whose rents have been left unreduced, "If there is any fault on the part of the aristocrats whose rents have been reduced you will have to pay for it." Is this guarantee a real guarantee to the English taxpayer, or is it illusory? The right hon. Gentleman provides for an immediate advance to be made by the Treasury for any sums left in default by the tenants. The landlord will not have to wait until he gets this Poor Law relief provided by the Bill; he will not have to wait until the Grand Juries make their presentment. Does the right hon. Gentleman really suggest to Parliament, with a serious face, to make good any default in their payments on the part of the Irish tenant out of the surpluses of England? If you are to continue to govern Ireland from here you will have largely to supplement the sums given for local purposes. For example, as it stands, the system of education in Ireland is a scandal. The right hon. Gentleman admitted practically in his speech that he could not, and would not, contemplate the misappropriation of these local funds, these Imperial contributions, to local purposes. He said, "We have provided that the Grand Jury shall levy a rate." If there is any tax in Ireland more odious than another, and which could be most easily and most readily resisted, and which the payers would most readily resist tomorrow, it is the Grand Jury Tax. The true test of the worth of these county guarantees is this: Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer take them into the money market to-morrow and see at what per cent. interest he could raise a loan upon them. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman is very like other Bills which some of us have seen, and which were presented to us with the assurance that the signature was a mere matter of form, and that we should never see or hear anything of the matter again. But those of us who have been weak enough to yield to the temptation have always seen and heard a good deal of it. So it will be with this Land Bill. These securities are not real unless they are given to you with the consent of the governed; unless they are given for the purpose of effecting a complete settlement of the land question. If they are not so given, if they are given without our consent, without local authority or sanction, for the purpose of carrying out a parody of land purchase, they are, in effect, and practically a swindle upon the English taxpayer. I come now to the end of my objections, which I have only very slightly sketched. In the first place, it is not an honest Bill; secondly, it will not afford a solution of the question; thirdly, it will continue and perpetuate and render absolutely certain additional agitation in Ireland; fourthly, its provisions cannot be carried out without danger to the Imperial Exchequer; fifthly, it is rejected by the people for whose benefit you ostensibly propose it. Well, is there nothing that can be done in this direction for a solution? I think, if the matter is approached free from Party considerations, with an earnest desire really to solve the question, with a sufficient knowledge of the situation and the conditions with which you have to deal, that it can be solved by the application of the credit which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to exhaust in settling only one-fourth of the question. I have said that if you take the limit not exceeding £50 valuation, you reduce the amount of money necessary to be provided for the solution by purchase to 55 per cent. of the present amount. That is according to the Returns of the operation of the Acts already. Between 45 and 46 per cent. of the money has been spent in purchasing holdings of over £50 valuation, and 54 or 55 per cent. in the purchase of holdings under £50 valuation. This limits the size of the question very materially. I have also shown that the question is further limited in size by the absence of any necessity for making provision in the settlement of the land question with regard to the tenure of the large areas of grazing ground in Munster, Leinster, and Connaught. I think the whole Province of Connaught, so far as the settlement of the land question is concerned, could be bought up for about ten years' purchase of the Poor Law valuation. I think I shall be able, when we get the necessary Returns, to prove what I say to the satisfaction of the right hon. Gentleman. Well, then, if you abandon the solution by purchase, there are two alternative solutions. The first is the reduction of rents by the action of the Courts under the Act of 1881 and the Acts amending it. The only other alternative is to adopt the principle of fining down the rents of those tenants whom the necessity of the Irish land question will compel you to deal with, and of those tenants alone. But the practical question, as I have shown, has been in reference to these tenants who constitute about 54 or 55 per cent. of the whole net annual value of estates in Ireland. On the average, with this class of tenants the question in dispute is a reduction of about 30 per cent. in their rents. My proposal, shortly, is to give the landlord so many years' purchase, reducing the rents of his judicial tenants—of this 55 per cent. of them—to a satisfactory amount. Let him, then, use the money in paying off the most onerous of his encumbrances. He will, in that way, as I shall show by-and-bye, increase his income on the one hand by getting rid of heavy payments of interest—as the Irish landlords have to pay a heavy rate for their mortgages—and he will give those of his tenants who are concerned in a settlement of the Land Question the 30 per cent. reduction for which they are clamouring, and without which it will be impossible ever to have peace in the agrarian relations of Ireland. Now let us see how that will work out. Under the system proposed by the right hon. Gentleman and in the typical case selected by him, the landowner with £100 a year net annual value, who is encumbered to the extent of £1,000, is left under the best circumstances with his present income of £40 a year reduced to £27 10s. Let us work out how the fining system would affect this landlord. He has, after providing for his encumbrances, in a case such as I have already given, a present income of £40 a year. According to the reduction of 30 per cent. on £55 worth of the net annual value of the estate—I assume that we have only to deal with 55 per cent. of the area of the estates—the reduction amounts to £16 10s. per annum. It is then lent on the security of the fund proposed by the right hon. Gentleman, 20 years' purchase of this reduction, or £330. You may either treat this as a permanent loan, or you may treat it under the system proposed by the Bill, I should prefer to treat it as a permanent loan, and not to associate it with a Sinking Fund. But I will take two cases—the one with a Sinking Fund and the other without. If you have a Sinking Fund the annuity on the £330 will amount at £4 per cent. to £12 10s. The interest on the balance of his encumbrances, about £650, at 6 per cent. will amount to about £40 a year. His new income will be £31 10s. with a Sinking Fund as compared with an income of under the purchase system in a similar case of £27 10s. Without the Sinking Fund his new income, with the necessity of paying only 2¾ per cent. will amount to £34 10s. a year, or a loss of only 13¾ per cent. on his original income of £40, instead of a loss of 32½ per cent. under the purchase system. Now, having shown you how it works for the landlord, I will show you how it would work as regards the fund and the capacity of the fund. The right hon. Gentleman in the typical case selected of a net annual value of £100 requires £2,000 in order to settle the Land Question upon that estate. I only require £330. That is to say, under the fining system you only require one-sixth of the advance from the public funds which you require under the purchase system in order to secure a reduction of 30 per cent for the tenant, where under the purchase system you only secure a reduction of 20 per cent. So that for the complete solution of this question you will require £166,500,000, and, dividing this by six, it brings it down to something like £27,000,000, which is less than the £30,000,000 provided under the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. The compass of the question, therefore, is well within the resources of the local credit of Ireland, if you approach it with a desire to settle it as a whole and not in a partial fashion of favouritism under this Bill. I have never seen any difficulty in a solution if the English taxpayer would loan his credit, and I see now the question can be solved with a limited loan of his credit. But I shall resist to the last this attempt of the right hon. Gentleman to destroy to take away from us the only credit we have available for this purpose, and that by the partial, insufficient, and unfair method he proposes. I am afraid I have been obliged to drag the House through a very wearisome mass of figures, but I think they are figures that will stand the test of examination. I have worked them out upon the example the right hon. Gentleman himself gave us, and I believe that the solution I have proposed would work out more favourably to the Irish tenant and also to the Irish landowner. Under the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman a large class of resident landlords will be shut out from the benefits of the measure and left without hope to struggle with their tenants in a contest that can only have one ending, who undoubtedly will be absorbed, will be submerged in this struggle, and who would prefer the proposal I have endeavoured to explain to this Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. I submit it is right to consider whether it is not time to make an attempt, so far as we can, to an approach to finality in this matter, so far as we can to grapple with the whole question which needs solution, devoting all our energies to its settlement, so that the turmoil, crime, and disturbance which always accompany agrarian agitation may be finally put an end to. Ever since 1879, when I joined this movement, this has been my ardent hope and desire, as it has, I believe, been that of my Colleagues. We do not fear the solution of this land question. We know that when you give independence and security to the Irish tenant, his worth as an Irishman and as an Irish Nationalist will be increased. We have not based our claim to nationhood on the sufferings of our country. We have merely pointed to them as illustrations of your incapacity to govern us—to do us justice from Westminster. But these things are not the foundation of Ireland's claim to a restitution of legislative independence. So far from the securing of the tenant in his holding and the solution of the land question interfering and hindering the settlement of the great national question, I am sure that, every injustice removed, every tenant secured in his holding, will assist in swelling the army of our supporters for the regeneration of our country. I now beg to move that the Bill be read a second time—that it be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the

Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—*(Mr. Parnell.)*

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*(5.20.) THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The hon. Member's speech will be read with interest by all classes in Ireland, but there is one class especially to whom I would like to commend its perusal, namely, the resident landlords, whom the hon. Member has taken under his protection. It will be interesting to them to learn the proposal of the hon. Gentleman on their behalf that their rents should be still further reduced by 20 per cent.

Several hon. MEMBERS: No, 30 per cent.

*MR. MADDEN: Hon. Members do not quite follow me. I was not alluding to the fining down proposal. I was alluding to the earlier portion of the hon. Member's speech, in which, having erroneously assumed that our proposal is based on a reduction of rents by 20 per cent., he proposed to effect a reduction of rents by this amount without compensation, and this is the suggestion which the hon. Gentleman preferred to the scheme of purchase, which, while compensating the landlord, would work out a reduction of 20 per cent. in the rents of the tenants who purchased. This portion of the hon. Gentleman's speech will be read with interest by the resident landlords as affording them some slight indication of the treatment they may expect under any legislative institution controlled by the hon. Gentleman—an institution of which I have heard it said that, in the event of its establishment, the hon. Gentleman would be thus the representative of Conservative opinion. There was also another significant portion of the hon. Gentleman's speech in which he suggested that the fair purchase value of a large part of Ireland might be taken at 10 years. But whatever the detailed criticism of the hon. Member may be, his speech may fairly be claimed as in substance a speech in favour of the Second Reading of this Bill, and the hon. Gentleman appeared to have unconsciously arrived at that conclusion, judging by the fact that he was about to sit down after moving that the Bill be read a second time.

MR. PARNELL: I was thinking of my own Bill at the moment.

*MR. MADDEN: The hon. Member may have been thinking of his own Bill, but the logical conclusion of his speech was that the present Bill ought to be read a second time, for the cardinal principle of the Bill consists in the hypothecation of the contributions from the Imperial Exchequer to local purposes. The hon. Member does not object to this. He merely proposes a more economical method of using the money thus raised. His suggestions on this point are very interesting, but they are not antagonistic to the principle of the Bill. The hon. Member has argued that this Bill would necessitate the sale of the whole of the estate on which any sales are effected. But that is not the case. I do not see how he can make this statement; but as he has admitted some confusion on the subject of different Bills, there may be running through his mind the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, which did proceed on that principle. The Bill does not require the sale of the whole of an estate, and, as a matter of fact, many landlords, including some of those he has mentioned, have sold only so far as to meet the requirements of individual tenants. But these are matters for consideration in Committee, and afford no ground for the rejection of the Bill. I think the first question and the main question for consideration is, shall the system of State-supported land purchase be maintained in Ireland? I do not propose to go into the details of past land legislation, but I would shortly remind the House that since 1869 every measure dealing with the land question in Ireland has contained the principle of State-assisted land purchase, and in each succeeding measure we find that principle growing in importance. In the Act of 1869, in the Act of 1870, in the Act of 1881, and, lastly, in the Ashbourne Acts of 1885 and 1888 the principle has been adopted. No one has expressed an opinion more strongly in favour of continuing the system than the hon. Member who has just sat down. The hon. Member for East Mayo has expressed his opinion strongly in favour of the principle, and so has the right hon. Members for Newcastle, and Bridgeton, and Reading, as well as Archbishop Walsh. I do not refer to the opinions of hon. Members who do not profess to have changed them. That being so, I may ask whether they have given any sufficient reason for a change of opinion. Not only is that the opinion of individual Members of this House, but it is the opinion of public bodies differing so widely Lord Cowper's Commission, and it is the opinion of the Irish Land League, and of the Landlords' Convention. When all these Bodies are in favour of a system of State-supported land purchase it is fair to conclude that there must be something extremely good in it, otherwise it could not have recommended itself to bodies of men holding such extremely opposite opinions in relation to Irish affairs. I have another remarkable piece of evidence in the same direction. There is a newspaper in Ireland called the *Irish Catholic*, which is ranked among the supporters of the hon. Gentleman. On the first appearance of the Bill that paper suggested its adoption, and it repeated that advice upon April 5, saying that the proper course to be followed by Irish Members was to seek the Amendment of the Bill in Committee rather than its rejection. But when the hon. Member for Cork put down a notice for its rejection then the paper said that the hon. Member must be supported in his opposition to the Bill. And why? Was it for the benefit of the tenants or of Ireland? Nothing of the kind. It was in the interest of the tenants and of Ireland that the paper recommended the acceptance of the Bill. But now it writes that nobody would rejoice more than it would if the result of the course now pursued would be the overthrow of the present Cabinet in consequence of the rejection of the Bill, adding that after all it might be possible to inflict on the Government a defeat which would compel them to make an appeal to the constituencies. This is a very candid confession, and it throws some light on the motives of the opposition to this measure. Of course, it is open to hon. Gentlemen to change their opinions, but some reasons ought to have been given by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down and his supporters for a change of opinion on a vital point connected with Irish policy. The hon. Gentleman described this Bill in its financial aspect as a parody on land purchase and a swindle on the English taxpayer. I assume he intended the ordinary meaning to attach to those words, and consequently by describing it as a swindle the hon. Gentleman intimates that it is at least possible that the English taxpayer will lose money by the Bill. The hon. Gentleman took part in an important debate in 1883, when a Resolution was moved by the First Lord of the Admiralty, and seconded by the present Chief Secretary for Ireland, bringing urgently before Parliament the question of land purchase. The question was then raised of a possible repudiation, and the hon. Gentleman, arguing against such a possibility, pointed out the exceptionally unfavourable circumstances under which the Church tenants had paid, having regard to the high price of the land, notwithstanding which the right hon. Gentleman who was then Chief Secretary (Sir G. Trevelyan) admitted that the tenants who had become owners had paid with remarkable punctuality, and the result would, it was said by the hon. Gentleman, be the same if the House would only apply itself to the task of removing difficulties, one of which was not advancing the whole of the purchase money. Such was the language of the hon. Member for Cork at that time. Now, our experience of the purchasers under the Church Act of 1869 and the Land Act of 1870 is of first-rate importance in considering the chance of any general repudiation on the part of the tenants. The price of the land was exceptionally high. The tenants under the Church Act were offered the option of buying at 22 and a fraction years' purchase or of having the estate sold over their heads. It has been said by their advocates that they bought under the strong pressure of coercion. The remarkable punctuality with which the debts incurred in the purchase had been paid is well worth the attention of the House. The amount of the capital written off as irrecoverable under the Act of 1869, which has been in force 21 years, is only £1 in every £2,363, and the amount outstanding in arrear is only 1-126th of the entire advance. Out of £1,906,585 it was only found necessary to capitalise £21,065 under the Act of

1887, or less than 1-95th. On this part of the argument, when the hon. Member describes the Bill as a swindle upon the English taxpayers, it is well to inquire what are the classes of risk incurred under the Bill. There are two classes of risk—first, the practical risk of individual insolvency or depreciation in the value of the land, and, secondly, the theoretical risk of a general repudiation. Against these risks the Bill provides two classes of security. We get the one-fifth guarantee deposit, the tenant's insurance, and the county percentage out of the holding itself. Experience shows that against the practical risk of depreciation in the land value, or the insolvency, unthriftiness, or drunkenness of the tenant, the one-fifth provided by the guarantee deposit would afford ample security to the State. The figures I have quoted as to the result of the operations under the Church Act, when it is said the land was bought on unfavourable terms, show that a smaller amount than one-fifth would have amply secured the State against what I call practical risks. Now, I wish to call the attention of the House to the difference between the present Bill and the Ashbourne Acts. It is this: that, while the Ashbourne Acts provide a security against practical risks, they provided no security against what I may call the theoretical risk of repudiation. The present Bill provides absolutely mathematical security. Against the most violent and extreme case of actual repudiation the taxpayer is absolutely and mathematically safe. Though the hon. Gentleman has called the Bill a "swindle," he has not ventured for a moment to approach an argument on the subject, or to show the smallest degree of infirmity in the figures brought before the House by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary when he introduced the Bill. He has not attempted that, for the reason that it would have been absolutely impossible. If no more than the capital value of contributions to local purposes is advanced, and the creditor has those contributions in his own hands to withhold, his security is a matter of mathematical demonstration. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has referred to the risk of repudiation. I have called the risk a theoretical danger, and he believes it to be so. The right hon. Gentlemen opposite has over and over again represented it as no danger at all, even when measures were suggested under which we might have expected danger to a greater extent than under the Bill of my right hon. Friend. I think the House will accept this proposition—that no voluntary transaction can ever afford a moral ground for repudiation. The hon. Member at the beginning of his speech indicated a line of argument which he did not pursue. The hon. Member said that he was going to show that by a system which he was pleased to call coercion which existed in Ireland there would be an interference with legal and proper combination of tenants; and that transactions under this Bill, instead of being voluntary, would be entered into in circumstances, as I understand, involving some element of coercion, ["Hear, hear!"] Friends of the hon. Member cheer that statement; but the hon. Member did not attempt to give a single instance of what he said the Government either had done or would do, namely, interfere with the legal combination of the tenants for the purpose of protecting their interests. The hon. Gentleman advanced no argument leading to the conclusion that purchase under this system would be other than absolutely voluntary. A measure of great importance was once submitted by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian; and the hon. Member then spoke, but did not indicate the slightest danger of repudiation. What was the measure? It was a system of purchase under which the tenant would have had absolutely no voice in fixing the price of the holding. If that system of purchase involved no risk of repudiation, how can it be suggested that the Irish tenant is likely to repudiate a bargain voluntarily entered into and the price of which is to be fixed by agreement, he being one of the parties to it? I must add that a great deal of what has been said on the subject of repudiation proceeds on the assumption, which is not founded on fact, that the £30,000,000 will be immediately advanced. Experience has shown that nothing of the kind will take place. A land purchase system must be universal and compulsory, or voluntary. I will assume that hon. Members opposite have not changed their opinions as to a system of land purchase based on voluntary purchase. It is extremely desirable to have such a system in Ireland, and for the reason that it is a necessity of the legislation begun in 1870, and carried to the extent of establishing dual ownership in 1881. I have heard dual ownership described as a partnership between the landlord and the tenant, and in any system of partnership there must be some provision for a dissolution between both parties when circumstances render the union intolerable, or there is some reason for bringing it to an end. It appears to me, therefore, that this is a reason why in Ireland, having established this system of partnership, there must be provided some continuous system of dissolution of the terms of partnership, and no other suggestion has been made except the principle of State-supported land purchase. This purchase must be gradual in its operation as applied to such cases. Experience has shown this to be the case in connection with the money advanced under the Ashbourne Acts. There have been £10,000,000 available in Ireland since 1885, and the whole of the amount has not yet been applied for. Why, then, should we assume that, in the case of the present measure, there will at once be an extraordinary development of the desire for a dissolution of partnership? There are strong prudential motives, which will keep the men who have paid in hard cash a considerable portion of the purchase-money of the holding from falling into line in a general strike against rent. That, at least, appeared to be the argument of the hon. Member in 1883. The hon. Member said that there was a general strike against rent in Ireland, and yet he pointed out that those who had become owners of their holdings had never been brought into line with that strike. But, as I have pointed out, this theoretical risk is amply provided for by the Bill, and the safety of the taxpayer is reduced to a point of almost mathematical certainty. So much for the question of security I was much interested in listening to that part of the speech of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) in which he promised to approach the question of the congested districts. That was a portion of the speech in which the House would have taken a great deal of interest, and I look forward to it with great interest.

Mr. PARNELL: I forgot to deal with that part of the question; it was an omission on my part.

*Mr. MADDEN: It strikes me as a most remarkable circumstance that such an important part of the Bill should be forgotten by the hon. Member, dealing as it did with the Irish Land Question in its acutest form. It appears to me that the Bill before us differs from other measures of land reform in one important particular. It is the first Bill that has made a real and practical effort to deal with this question upon special grounds. I believe that the great mistake of your legislation during the last 30 years in relation to Irish land has been the ignoring of the fact that there are districts in Ireland in which the Land Question assumes a special aspect, and must be dealt with in a special manner. This is the great fault of the measures which Liberal Governments considered as a great panacea for Irish ills between 1849 and 1860. In the last-mentioned year they applied to the whole of Ireland the commercial system — a system of dealing with the contract of tenancy as they would deal with any other contract — applying it to portions of Ireland to which it was inapplicable. I think, also, that this was the great fault of the Encumbered estates system, followed as it was by the Landed Estates Courts system—that is to say, applying the commercial principle to the whole of Ireland generally, without considering the special circumstances of the portions of the country to which the system was to be applied. The idea then was to get a number of purchasers and new blood introduced amongst Irish landowners, holding out land as an ordinary commercial investment. Printed documents were circulated on the authority of the State, inviting purchasers and declaring that rents were so low in certain cases that handsome profits could be made, praising them, and this commercial system was applied to the whole of Ireland, without considering to what portion of the country it was applicable to and to what portion inapplicable. But the system broke down, and hence the legislation of 1870 and 1881. Again, the mistake was made of dealing with Ireland as a whole, in respect to which one uniform system of legislation was possible. I have thought for many years that this is a cardinal defect of past legislation on the Irish Land Question. I was greatly struck by a passage in the writings of Lord Dufferin on the Irish question, which I read some years ago. I quote from memory, but I think the passage ran somewhat in this way—

> "Is it an adequate reason for altering the relations between landlord and tenant in the most prosperous parts of Ireland because on the west coast a tenant cannot live on his holding if he had it for nothing?"

It seems to me that our legislation has been founded on the mistake that Lord Dufferin there indicated. That mistake is avoided by this Bill, which is entitled to recognition as the first attempt, on any adequate scale, to deal specially with the congested districts. How does it do so? What is the disorder from which the congested districts suffer? The disease may be simply described as congestion. How is it to be met? What do we mean by congestion? We mean that the population in existing circumstances is too great to derive subsistence from the occupation in which they are engaged, of hiring and tilling land. Some other mode must be called in aid. There are two modes in which the evil of congestion can be met. You may uncongest. And the Bill deals with this matter in two ways—by emigration and migration. Now, I do not believe in migration as a possible scheme. Nor as to migration, you must get lands unoccupied by the tenants in some of the non-congested districts. That class of land in Ireland, under the worst cricumstancs, fetches a high price. It is right that the Bill should contain provisions which may be of use in certain exceptional cases; but I think if we look at the matter on a large scale we cannot expect much from migration Then, Sir, you have the question of emigration. It is most desirable that there should be an outlet from every part of the United Kingdom to a field of enterprise in the British colonies. As an Irishman, I should prefer that legislation should, as far as possible, enable my fellow-countrymen to remain in their native land; we must, no doubt, have recourse to emigration under certain circumstances. But what commends this Bill especially to my mind is that, for the first time, it proposes to call into existence a Body provided with ample funds to develop those industries to which we must look for uncongesting the congested districts, by altering the conditions under which they are inhabited, and rendering the population no longer redundant in proportion to the means of existence and of remunerative employment. I hope that the Government may have the assistance of Members in all parts of the House in passing this portion of the Bill. I have an agreeable recollection of the passage through Parliament, last Session, of the Light Railways Bill, which I hope and believe will aid in developing the resources of these less favoured districts of Ireland. That measure received the support of hon. Members opposite; and I can see no reason why they should not equally support this portion of the present Bill, so that it may be passed with a concensus of opinion in its favour. If it be passed into law, I believe that in the future, when the controversies and incidents of to-day have been long since forgotten, the legislation of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary will be remembered with gratitude, as having laid the foundation of comparative prosperity in the less favoured districts of Ireland. I have heard this Bill spoken of as a complicated one, and that may be either praise or blame, according to circumstances. If the subject can be treated simply, it is blame; if it requires complicated provisions for its adequate treatment, it is praise. For all persons not concerned in the details involved in the working out of the scheme it is an extremely simple one. The three classes of persons who require to understand the main principle of the Bill are the landlords, tenants, and taxpayers. Is there any complication as between landlord and tenant? They can come together and fix a price; and if they cannot agree they can invoke arbitration. On the vesting order being made the tenant becomes the owner, and the landlord knows how he has to receive the price allotted to him under the order. This arrangement, so far as it affects landlord and tenant, is simplicity itself. Of course, behind that arrangement there are complicated provisions to meet certain cases; but they are not of general concern. All the taxpayer desires to know, unless he takes a very intelligent interest in the Bill, is summed up in the question—"Am I safe?" The taxpayers are told, "You yourselves are your own paymasters, and have the power of withholding the annual payments," the capitalised value of which cannot be exceeded under the Bill. If the theoretical danger become an actuality then, of course, there are complicated adjustments of liability between the guaranteeing parties. It is necessary that complicated provisions should be in the Bill, but the clauses directly affecting the landlord, the tenant, and the taxpayer, are plain, simple, and intelligible, and their purport can be stated in a few sentences. The complicated details concern only legal and financial experts. The more minute criticisms of the hon. Member for Cork may very well be dealt with in Committee. There is great difficulty in reconciling the adjectives and the verbs which hon. Members opposite use in relation to this measure. It is inconsistent to talk of landlords absconding and walking off with what I have heard termed the swag, and yet to suggest that their interests are not satisfactorily dealt with. The hon. Member (Mr. Parnell) might have been expected to make his choice as to which of the two views he intended to present to the House, but as he has not done so, it is not for me to make it for him. There are three classes of persons in the list of those who have been spoken of. There are, first of all, those who are absentees to start with, and who, therefore, could not abscond, because they never were in the country; next there are the large companies who are landowners; and, lastly, there are landlords such as the Duke of Abercorn, Sir Victor Brooke, the Duke of Leinster, and the Marquis of Waterford, who have not absconded, because they still remain in Ireland. It appears to be an infelicitous use of the word to speak of any of these classes as having absconded. Over and over again the House has heard that the class of owners of land that the country wants to be rid of are the absentees, and one of the great advantages anticipated from any system of land purchase is that it will transfer to resident occupiers the estates of public companies and of absentee landlords. So far as land purchase has gone this is what has been, to a large extent, accomplished. There is a fallacy involved in speaking of a single landlord having gone off with £240,000, as if this were an isolated transaction affecting himself only, whereas his property has been transferred to hundreds of tenants, from whose point of view the final result must also be looked at. It is, from their point of view, that schemes of this kind always are professedly regarded by hon. Members opposite, except when they are proposed by the present Government. The hon. Member for Cork has gone into a detailed criticism of the effect of the Bill upon the resident landlord, whom he has taken under his protection. In a particular case he has assumed that the interest payable to the landlord would be £27 10s., instead of £40. That comparison appears to me to be based upon an unwarrantable assumption, namely, that the landlord's property before purchase was an investment as secure as that of the stock is to which it is invested. This would seem to suppose that land in Ireland offered an exceedingly secure investment. I do not think the suggestions of the hon. Member tended exactly in that direction, and the hon. Gentleman did say that taking land worth £2,000, the landlord could borrow £1,000 at 6 per cent. interest.

Mr. PARNELL: I took the same case and the same amount of interest in explaining both systems—the system of fining down and the system of purchase.

*Mr. MADDEN: From what the hon. Gentleman has said as to having to borrow at 6 per cent., to the extent of half its value, it is clear that he, at all events, does not regard land in Ireland as so secure an investment as the public funds. If Irish landlords invested their purchase money in such investments of such a character that to borrow half their value they had to pay 6 per cent. interest, then their annual income would not be reduced one fraction from what it now was. The hon. Gentleman offered, at the conclusion of his speech, what he regarded as an alternative solution of the question. It is important to note that his solution, equally with that of the Government, is based on the cardinal principle of borrowing money on the security of contributions to the local rates; but it differs from the Land Purchase Scheme of the Government in not being a Land Purchase Scheme at all. Whatever may be the merits of the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork, it is not a system of land purchase. The tenant's rent may be fined down, but he is a tenant still. The hon. Member suggested a mode of applying certain portions of the money intended to be dedicated to land purchase, which is not incompatible with the general scheme now before the House.

MR. PARNELL: If the scheme of the Government is adopted there will be no credit left for carrying out my proposal.

*MR. MADDEN: I think it would be perfectly possible to engraft upon the scheme of the Government a mode of economising the funds available by applying a portion in fining down rents. Her Majesty's Government is of opinion that the scheme they now put forward affords the best mode of escape from a system of dual ownership where it has become intolerable to both parties. Supposing the hon. Member is right in contending that economy could be effected by fining down rents with a portion of the money allocated from local resources, that is no reason for voting against the Second Reading of this Bill. The hon. Member and the Government are together in wishing to economise the funds available, but I should like to know how much the hon. Member would apply to fining down rents according to his proposal. [Mr. PARNELL: 27,000,000.] In that case, indeed, the hon. Member's scheme differs from that of the Government in this—that he would apply £27,000,000 to what is not a scheme of land purchase at all. But I would remind the House that until it was the scheme of the present Government, land purchase was the plan proposed by the hon. Member himself for the settlement of the Irish Land Question. It appears to me that there are only two classes of Members who can sincerely vote against this Bill—those who do not believe that the Bill would produce prosperity to, and the pacification of, Ireland; and those who do not wish it to have that effect. With the latter I shall not argue, but, in addressing myself to the former, I ask who are the unbelievers? On this doctrine I preach to those who have long since, at all events, professed to be the converted. I would remind the House that since 1881 there has been no prominent man upon either side of politics who has not laid it down that the ultimate solution of the Land Question in Ireland is to be found in some system of State-assisted land purchase. It has always been admitted that the Land Question is the cardinal difficulty in Ireland, and the party opposite has admitted that it could be most effectively dealt with by a system of land purchase. Let them show, if they can, that the measure before the House is not adequate to deal with the question. Let them show, if they can, that it is unjust, or that it would involve any undue risk, or any risk at all, to the taxpayer. The hon. Gentleman has not attempted to do so. Let hon. Members opposite show, if they can, some more excellent way of dealing with this question; and let them show, if they can, when their former professions on the subject ceased to be applicable. Let them show, if they can, that their opposition to this Bill is based upon some other principle than that of embarrassing the Government. I believe that the Bill will be accepted by the great majority of the House as the wisest and the safest, as certainly it is the most comprehensive and the most generous, scheme ever submitted to the Legislature for dealing with the great difficulty of Ireland, upon principles that have been accepted by representatives of every class of opinion in England and Ireland.

*6.26.) SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland has thrown out a long series of challenges, in the perfectly courteous and Parliamentary language which he always uses towards hon. opponents, and I rise for the purpose of replying to them. In the first place, he asked whether we are prepared to stick to our often-declared opinions in favour of a system of State-supported land purchase in Ireland. I answer, yes; but not to the Government system. Our objection to the Government system of State purchase, is that it is brought forward in the interest of the individual and not in the interest of the State. I will show at once what I mean. It is not the interest of the State to drive the landowners from Ireland. The right hon and learned Gentleman made a most extraordinary and dangerous fallacy in one part of his speech. He said that Ireland had too long suffered from absentee landlords, and that they should be got rid of. It is true that absentee landlords are a great disadvantage to Ireland, but the circumstances are not improved if their connection with the country is finally and absolutely cut off, and they are enabled to take out of the country a very large sum of money. Is Ireland improved by being put into this miserable condition, that, being an agricultural country, whose wealth is in her soil, she should have this amount of money taken out of the country for the next 50 years? That, as it seems to me, would not be an advantage to Ireland. Our object is not to remove the landlords from Ireland, but to supplement them by adding to their number—in great numbers, I hope — other and smaller landowners—that is to say, the most solid, respectable, reliable, and solvent tenants. That is the only species of land purchase to which I, for my own part, have ever acceded, and it is the only species which has ever been approved by a vote in this House, on the part of the great Party to which I belong. My firm belief is—and very sad I am to think how great an opportunity has been lost—that if, during the last 10 years in Ireland. there had been a permanent system of land purchase, which dealt as simply and as trenchantly with the obstacles to purchase as, I freely acknowledge, the Ashbourne Act, of which this is a continuation, applies, and if that Act had only been applied to the more solvent and reliable tenants, then, by this time, there would have been a very great number of such landowners in Ireland. What are the principles that ought to be enforced? In 1884 I was privileged to bring in a Bill, which I certainly was not privileged to pass, and that Bill laid down that in order to get the purchase money from the State, the tenant was to give a hostage to the future by himself paying down one-fourth of the purchase money. But that was not all. Under one circumstance, and one circumstance alone, was the whole of the purchase money to be advanced by the State, and that was if there was a local guarantee. But, observe the difference between that local guarantee and the one proposed in the Bill now under debate. We proposed to introduce the best substitute we could for a Local Representative Body, and we did not propose to grant any loan until the applicant's neighbours had pronounced him to be a trustworthy and solid man, and had undertaken responsibility by guaranteeing the rent. That was the utmost limit to which we would go. But this Bill is of quite another sort. It deals with all tenants, good and bad alike. It permits, and the permission has been freely exercised, the clearing out from whole estates of the landlords, and the settling on the public, as the tenants of the public, of all the farmers on those estates, whatsoever their personal character and power of making their promises good. I must own that I do not wonder that this Bill gives too much for the benefit of the landlord. When the Ashbourne Act was first introduced into the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury stated markedly that it was brought in on behalf of the landlords as well as of the tenants, for no body of human beings had had greater suffering and distress inflicted on them by Act of Parliament than the Irish landlords. I deny that. I venture te assert that English and Scotch landlords have voluntarily done more for their tenants in the shape of rent reductions, than the Irish landlords have, by law, been compelled to do for theirs. A desire to aid the landlords shows itself in every line of the Bill. The hon. Member for Cork did not put the matter in so striking a way as if he had chosen one or two special districts, and had shown how much of the purchase money has gone into the pockets of a few landlords. In one county I find that, of £500,000 advanced, £450,000 went into three pockets, while in another county, out of £316,000, some £296,000 went into two pockets. Now, those were men who could not find anybody to buy their property in the open market, and the State came in, bought it, and constituted itself the landlord for 50 years. But now consider the way in which the landlords are benefited by the details of this Bill. I consider the clauses relating to the addition of two years to the purchase of the estate, on the account of arrears, as most dangerous to the taxpayer and most improper. Seriously, does the Government consider what it is doing? Here is a farm where there are two years of arrears. That must mean one of two things—either the rent is too high, or the farmer is not trustworthy to pay the rent; and yet the Government actually make these arrears one of the assets which they are going to offer to the public, and, at the end of 50 years, the public is to be liable for having bought an estate for two years' purchase more than it is worth, because the rent has not been paid. Again, the Government propose to ascertain the net value by deducting the landlord's half share of the rates—8 per cent.; but in order to ascertain the net value how would anybody going to buy a property himself instead of for the public proceed? He would take off the expenses of management, the agents' and the sub-agents' and the clerks' salaries, Income Tax, and tithe rent-charge, and he would take off the prospective taxes and charges, which will be thrown on Irish land when Irishmen have their own way, and can spend their own money, as they will under the promised County Council Bill, if it is worth anything. Now, these together constitute a very serious deduction, and yet what does the Government do? It capitalises all these deductions, and calls upon the State to pay down solid cash to compensate the landlord for what he does not surrender. The hon. Member for Cork asks how far the British taxpayer will allow his credit to go to settle the Irish question, and said the Secretary for Ireland has limited the amount to £33,000,000 or £43,000,000. The Secretary for Ireland, I respectfully say to the hon. Member for Cork, has done no such thing. It is absolutely impossible to place any limit on purchase when once it is begun, unless Parliament buttons up its pockets and says no more money shall be given at all. The present leader of the House argued that question in 1886, and showed, with absolute and irresistible force, that if once a purchase system is established you must apply it to the whole extent of the land which offers itself for sale in Ireland. The essence of this Bill is that the tenants of Ireland are to become owners of the land at an annual payment of 20 per cent. less than the rent they now pay, and you must make up your minds, if you pass the Bill, that its benefit shall be extended to the whole of Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman has challenged me to say that this is a swindle on the taxpayer. Well, I do not use that word, but I do assert that the taxpayer will be put in extreme peril, and I should like to remind hon. Members opposite that, in their addresses at the last election, they estimated the sum required under the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian at from £50,000,000 to £150,000,000. In the year 1886, I myself stated that if the Government once began to buy Irish land they might render themselves liable to a burden of £200,000,000, and I was vociferously cheered from those Benches. Now, those are the conditions that the taxpayer has to meet. He is going to become the landlord for Ireland, and he is going to find himself face to face with the tenants of Ireland, from whom he must exact every penny of their rent, for the space of half a century, or this scheme will break down. You must remember that this enormously complicated scheme is founded on two absolutely different conditions. One is that the tenants of Ireland should continue to pay their rent regularly. And here I must quote a few lines for the benefit of my Liberal Unionist friends from their great leader. The noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (Lord Hartington) in speaking upon the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, stated that the bad harvests which had prevailed in Ireland had rendered the payment of reasonable rents in that country impossible. Is it to be supposed that, during the next 50 years, we are not to have a recurrence of those bad harvests. If we do have a recurrence what position will the British taxpayer be in under the provisions of this Bill? In such a state of things how will the State be able to help itself? There is also the point relating to the congested districts to be considered. The great bulk of the English public appear to be still under an illusion with regard to the congested districts of Ireland. In those parts of Ireland the tenant is not so much affected by good and bad seasons; scarcely any rent can be paid in most seasons, and in some seasons no rent at all can be paid. In those districts rent is demanded for land which in England would pay absolutely no rent at all, or, at the outside, perhaps, 6d. per acre might be paid for it in large quantities for the poor grazing it afforded. The present rents are paid for the privilege of dwelling upon it, while the living of the family was made elsewhere. In the worst districts it may be said that those upon the land form a sort of humble and miserable villa population, who acquire the right of living upon the land, but not the power of getting their living out of it. The Government, I feel sure, would approach this part of the question with every desire to be humane and of service to the poorer classes in Ireland, but the Attorney General for Ireland has said that the Government does not approve of migration or emigration, and that their policy is to assist the people to pursue some more profitable industry by the aid of the State. But that is not the main feature of this Bill as regards the congested districts of Ireland. The main feature in the Bill, as regards those districts, is that the landlords should go off with a certain number of years' purchase in their pockets of rents which ought never to have been exacted at all, and on the other hand that the people should be encouraged to remain upon their holdings. There are proposals, too, for amalgamating holdings. How idle to talk of amalgamating two holdings, neither of which is worth 6d an acre of rent. Do not the Government see what a terrible responsibility they are laying up for themselves in the future in reference to these matters, in buying out landlords in these congested districts? They do see it: for they have inserted clauses allowing the Lord Lieutenant to forbear from selling up a defaulting tenant, and for enabling the Land Commission to work a farm themselves, if they cannot sell it. The proposal that the Land Commissioners should have power to send men to cultivate holdings in respect of which the tenants make default in their payments will result in the men working them not making sufficient to pay for their shoe leather. Is the price of produce in Ireland always to remain at its present figure? In England and Scotland, when there was a great fall in the price of produce the landlords and the tenants put their heads together, and it was agreed that the loss should fall upon the landlords. But in Ireland, when the landlord has gone out of the country with the value of his estate in his pocket, the Government will find themselves face to face with the tenants, and the British public will find themselves in the odious position of having to exact the full rent in the face of a falling market. And whom is the British public to be brought face to face with? The original tenant will, in all probability, have sold his holding at a much better price than he gave for it, and having gone off with his 20 per cent. of rent in his pocket, the tenant in possession will pay the full value rent to the Treasury part, and part to the money-lender, and the latter is the man whom the British public will be brought face to face with. It was reasons of this kind that induced the Government to refuse to lend the public credit in order to enable the crofters in Scotland to buy their crofts. The Government then said that they would not throw a burden upon the labourers of England in order to provide crofts for the Highlanders. The Government now propose to do something for the landlords and the tenants of Ireland which they will not do for those of any other portion of the United Kingdom. Are they prepared to advance money, at 2¾ per cent. interest, to the London shopkeepers to purchase their houses, or to farmers in the English or Scotch counties to enable them to buy their holdings? Certainly not. Everything is reserved for Ireland, which has the best land system for the tenant of any in the United Kingdom if it were properly carried out. That land system depends upon the principle of dual ownership, which has led to the prosperity of the most prosperous class in the country, and that principle the Government are now going to destroy. I am now going to say something which, perhaps, may be thought very hard, but I think it my duty to say it. Our legislation ought always, as far as possible, to represent the real facts of the situation. What are the real facts of the situation? The Irish landlords have estates which give them legally a certain income, but those estates are not as rapidly saleable as they would be if they were in England. If, therefore, the Government wish to encourage the landlords to sell their estates, let them give the landlords an exact substitute for their estates; let them buy the Irish landlords out with an Irish Stock, if the people choose to agree through their genuine representatives to the creation of such a Stock. I think that is a perfectly reasonable proposal. The landlords would receive their incomes from such a Stock, but, doubtless, when they came to sell their land they would find that they would have to submit to considerable loss. But why should the British public have to bear that loss? There has been an instance lately of the goodness of Irish securities. The City of Dublin has recently consolidated its debt upon very satisfactory and honourable terms, in face of great difficulties. The security of the city rates in Ireland is good enough for the capitalist; the security of the county rates ought to be good enough for the ex-landlord. To turn to a minor point, I must also object to that part of the Bill by which it is proposed to give to the men who are to carry the measure into effect the enormous income of £2,500 a year with pensions, or £3,000 a year without pensions. There is not a Member of the House who does not know there is not a single Civil servant, at the head of a great State Department, doing the most responsible and laborious work, who ever gets a halfpenny more than £2,500 a year, and that it is only as a mark of great confidence on the part of his masters that he gets as much as that. The permanent Secretary for Ireland only gets £2,500, for giving up his position in the English Civil Service, which was his natural home. That is my first objection. But my second objection, which goes to the root of the whole matter, is that this large permanent paid Body is not to have any representative element at all. In my opinion it ought to be a representative Body, with one or two paid Government servants upon it. The right hon. Gentleman said that if there is a voluntary acceptance there will be no moral ground for repudiation. In the case of the tenant it will be sometimes, but not always, a voluntary acceptance, but it will not be so in the case of the great body of Irishmen. This Bill is being imposed upon Ireland without the consent of her representatives. Lord Leitrim said—

> "Should the Purchase of Land Bill pass into law in anything like its present form?' My answer is, 'If the Irish representatives accept it, Yes; if they reject it, No.'"

Lord Leitrim knows Ireland; he knows it is certain that years will come when the rent cannot be paid; he knows that we must come on the guarantee; and he knows what a guarantee is worth that is not given, but taken by force. Lord Derby, on the other hand, says—

> "The opposition offered to the Purchase Bill by the Nationalist Party is, to my mind, the strongest argument in its favour."

The noble Earl says so now, but will his inheritors and successors say so 20 or 30 years hence? The Budget shows us that we shall never have any additional indirect taxation, and the burden will consequently fall upon the payers of Income Tax. if the Irish rents are not paid. Just imagine what the Irish Representatives will say. They will say, "Our consent was never asked; you took the Probate Duty, the Licence Duty, and the payment for education, and we refused to give our sanction." I ask hon. Gentlemen to consider what the Irish Members will think 20 or 30 years hence when the education money is taken. The landlord will sell his estate without any consideration being taken of the fact that it is morally liable to a contribution towards the education of the people. Consequently the Irish people will find themselves in this predicament —that they will not get their share of the Education Grant, inasmuch as the landlord will have carried off in his pocket the means out of which it ought to be paid. Again, if we have a great war all this beautiful, complicated, and delicate scheme, founded on the supposition of the nation being able to borrow money at 2½ or 2¾ per cent. will all go to the winds, and the taxpayers will lose every penny. There was one challenge which the right hon. and learned Gentleman made, and that challenge I boldly meet. The right hon. Gentleman said that coercion does not affect this Bill, which will be worked in a perfectly impartial and fair manner to all parties. That is not the case. In the present state of Ireland it cannot be from the nature of the circumstances. Those who want to sell their land belong to what is termed the party of law and order, while the tenants, and still more their advisers, are classed as opponents of law and order. Let hon. Members observe what great impunity there is under the present system. The Land Commissioners reported that the agent of the Drapers'

Company, who wished to sell in a very large number of cases, inserted incorrect rents in the agreements for sale, with the deliberate intention of deceiving the Commissioners for the benefit of his employers. Nevertheless, the company have kept that agent in their employment. If an agent of theirs had been guilty of such conduct in dealing with their English property, they would have dismissed him at once, but they forgave him because it was in Ireland, and in relation to the Treasury. This shows the spirit in which many who are selling come to the sale. If a great company can do such things, to what extent will common squireens think they are justified in getting the utmost they can out of the public? With regard to the question of pressure on the tenants, let me refer to the examination of Mr. J. G. M'Carthy before the Cowper Commission. This witness was asked by the President, "How does he (the agent) exercise the pressure?" The reply was—

> "By telling the tenant he must either sign a contract for sale or go out. I have seen letters of this class. I have a letter in my possession from an extensive land agent, telling the tenant that the sheriff would not be put off beyond to-morrow, but that if he handed the sheriff the contracts for purchase duly executed he would not take possession."

Surely a contract signed under such circumstances cannot be free. Now, the Government have decided that this terrible pressure shall not be counteracted by the advice of those who are advising the tenants in their own interests and in that of the taxpayer. The Chief Secretary has never in Parliament thought it right to deny a statement which has been made two or three times—namely, that the Government brought a criminal charge against an Irish Member of Parliament, because, in the most moderate manner, he advised the tenants that a certain number of years' purchase—17 years, I think—was too high. [MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Who was that?] That Member was the hon. Member for Monaghan. He was not convicted on the charge, and he may not have been prosecuted; but the Government prosecutor went into Court for the purpose of prosecuting. By taking that action, the Government showed that they consider the giving of advice of that nature, even in so moderate a manner, to be a punishable crime in Ireland. Now, the Government base the fair rent in Ireland on a deduction of 8 per cent. of the rates and taxes which the landlord has to pay.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman cares to be interrupted. I think he refers to what he calls my estimate of the general difference between the net and the gross rent in Ireland. The sum I myself took was merely for the purpose of illustration. I believe that the general average is far less than 7 per cent.

*SIR G. TREVELYAN: I am surprised at that being the result. I will not name any percentage, but simply say that the Government arrived at a fair rent by deducting a certain sum for rates and taxes. The hon. Member for Cork, in an extraordinarily able speech at Kildare, based the fair rent very differently. He stated in that speech that when the judicial rent had been decided the tenants should deduct from it various charges which the landlord now paid, and which they would have to pay if they became their own landlords. They must deduct, he said, half the poor rate and half the county cess, the income tax, the tithe rent-charge, and agents' fees, and they must make allowances for bad debts, and also for the additional taxation which would certainly be placed upon the land for developing the education of the country. The net amount which the landlord was in the habit of getting would thus be reached, and the tenants would be able to give him a liberal number of years' purchase. I entirely agree with this statement of the hon. Member for Cork. But when the Bill before the House becomes law, what if the hon. Member for Cork and his friends go to Ireland and tell the tenants what the hon. Member for Cork told them at Kildare? Does the House seriously think that they will be allowed to make such statements with impunity in places where purchases are on foot? I maintain that coercion then will be sharper, and that the gaols will be fuller than ever. The measure before the House cannot be fairly worked under the present system of government in Ireland; and though it has been brought forward with the express desire of pacifying Ireland, it will only result in convulsing and irritating the country; and instead of settling the relations between this country and Ireland on a satisfactory footing, it will at no long interval bring about quarrels and misunderstandings between the Irish people and the Government graver than any of those which have occurred in the unhappy history of Ireland. I have spoken not only as a Representative of the taxpayer, but as a former Irish administrator. I have spoken to-day exactly in the same way as I spoke in 1883, in 1884, in 1886, and in 1888; and in my character of Representative of the taxpayer, and of an administrator who knew Ireland, I say I am heartily and unreservedly and sincerely opposed to this Bill.

*(7.22.) MR AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow): If I had not heard the concluding sentence of the right hon. Gentleman, I should certainly not have realised the fact that he opposed the Second Reading of the Bill; indeed, his observations, like those of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), appeared to be more applicable to the Committee stage on the Bill rather than to the Second Reading. The right hon. Gentleman complained that the Bill is too favourable to the landlord. He also complained that it is too favourable to the tenant, and he argued that it is in some way or other injurious to the taxpayer. He seems to forget that the measure is the result of the Bill to which he was a party, and which is now law—the Land Act of 1881. Another of his complaints is that the Bill will tend to cut out the present residential landlords, and convert them into absentee landlords. That would have been a very good argument to have used before the Land Act of 1881 was passed, because the effect of that Act was literally to do that which the right hon. Gentleman says this Bill will do. The Act of 1881 gave to the tenants the three f's—free sale, fixity of tenure, and fair rent. That represents exactly the interests of the many men in England who own property subject to a rent-charge, and I never heard that a rent-charger upon land had the obligation of a landlord. When we speak of the obligation of a landlord, we understand the obligations of the squire of a parish, or of some great landowner, who gives parties and employs labourers, and deals liberally with his tenants, and attends to their farms. Can it be said that a man who has never any right to go on the land at all, so long as the tenant observes his part of the contract, is a landlord. It is right we should understand that, since the Act of 1881, to speak of landlords in Ireland is altogether a mistake and a blunder; they may be rent-chargers, but they are certainly not landlords in the proper sense of the term. It is the establishment of dual ownerships in Ireland that makes this Bill a necessity. What is now the interest of the tenant? It is, of course, to get his rent reduced as often as he can; and how does he try to do that? Why, by reducing the produce of the soil as much as possible. The object of every tenant, and of every country, and of every Department of the State should be to encourage the best form of agriculture. That is not done by having laws which encourages the tenant to reduce the produce of his land, to cultivate the land in a slovenly and unscientific manner lest his rent should be increased. Ireland, or that part of the country outside of Ulster, has not the same resources in the way of manufactures and commerce that England or Scotland has; therefore, it is of the utmost importance that if agriculture be the staple industry, every opportunity should be afforded the tenant. I thought it was determined long ago that it was desirable, if possible, to improve the position of the Irish peasant, and, if we could, to help him by State aid. Surely that is a course of conduct to which hon. Members opposite can raise no sort of reasonable objection. That seems to me to be the reason which varies this case from the case put by the right hon. Gentleman. He referred to the shopkeepers in Bond Street, and to the agriculturalists of England who may prefer a similar claim to have money advanced to them by the State for the purpose of buying the goodwill of their businesses or farms. But before the argument can apply it must be shown that the condition of the shopkeepers in Bond Street and of the agriculturalist in England has in some sort of way been affected as the condition of the Irish tenant has been affected by legislation. That cannot be shown. It was the Act of 1881 that created the dual ownership, and it is the dual ownership which now throws on the State the responsibility of dealing with the difficulties of

the situation. What is it that is proposed by this Bill? It is proposed that an advantage should be given to the landlords and to the tenants. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, in 1886, said we owed a great deal to the Irish landlords; and he would not venture to introduce his Home Rule Bill unless he had first made the landlords safe, as their position might be rendered precarious by the action of the Legislature. Again, so far as the tenants are concerned, every one will agree that some advantage should be given to them. What is that advantage to be? It is said that they are to get the land for themselves and pay annually for it a sum of money which is less than the rent they are now called upon to pay. But what is the real explanation of it? It is that the British Government has power to borrow money at 2¾ per cent. on its own security, a power which certainly is not possessed by individuals. Well, if it can obtain that money on those terms and lend it again at 4 per cent., it makes a clear profit of 1¼ per cent. per annum; and if you spread the operation over a period of 49 years and form a Sinking Fund, as is proposed in this Bill, it becomes possible, by means of such Sinking Fund, to pay off the principal. That is what the British Government are now seeking to do on behalf of the Irish tenants; and, assuming the security they take for the loans to be good, nobody can be injured in the slightest degree. Then the point arises, Is that security good? Comparisons have been made between this Bill and the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian; and the *Daily News* this morning publishes extracts from the speeches and the election addresses of Unionist Members in 1886, in which the Bill of that year was condemned. The editor of that paper has done me the honour to quote some words from my election address, in which I stated that the opposition of the Irish landlords was to be bought off at a cost of £150,000,000, which money was to be paid by the taxpayers of England and Scotland. No doubt I did at that time look with disapprobation on the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman; and if it were now before the House, I should still disapprove of it, because it contained none of the points which recommend to our favour the Bill of the Chief Secretary now being debated; it contained none of the securities which are now provided for. Much has been said as to the consent of the Irish Representatives not being given to this Bill, and as to the probability of having to fall back ultimately on Imperial Revenues to redeem the loan. But I believe we shall never have to resort to the second line of defence, and that the security taken in the first instance will prove ample. That security consists not only of the landlords' interest, but also of the tenants' interest. The landlords' interest will be all that will be paid for by the money to be advanced. That interest is a mere rent-charge, liable to be diminished by unskilful or lazy tilling of the soil, and is not the ownership of the estate. But, in addition to this, the Government have, as security, the property of the tenant. The Cowper Commission's Report, or rather that part signed by Earl Milltown, showed that the interests of tenants have realised, on the average, 20 years' purchase when the Land League have allowed sales to take place. Therefore, if the Government lend £1,700 on a property producing a rent-charge of £100 a year, the total value of the security, allowing only 17 years purchase for the tenants' interest, will be £3,400. It is said that the value of the tenants' interest is very uncertain, because there may be combinations amongst them. It is, I think, surprising that Home Rule Members should suggest the possibility of a combination among tenant proprietors to repudiate engagements to which they have voluntarily put their seal. I have never heard such a charge made against the Irish farmers, even from the Conservative Benches or platforms. I do not believe those farmers are more dishonest than either Scotchmen or Englishmen; and I do not agree that, having obtained money from the taxpayers, they would pocket it and then immediately repudiate the transaction. It has been suggested that they would be justified in doing so, because the transaction will not have been carried out with the assent of their Representatives in this House. But what does it matter if the bargain has been made without the assent of their Representatives in Parliament? There would have been something in that objection to transactions under the Bill of the leader of the Opposition, because, under that Bill, the tenant would have had no choice as to whether or not he should purchase his farm. But under this Bill he will enter into the bargain because he wishes to do so, and I believe there will be a keen competition for the advances. What was transferred by the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman opposite was the landlords' interests, and consequently only half the security afforded by the present Bill. Then under the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, to whom was the land to be transferred? The reason for that Bill was that the landlords would have been at the mercy of the Irish Government, and the Bill was intended to save them from being sacrificed. Yet the right to the property was to be transferred to the Irish Government, the rents were to be collected by revenue collectors appointed by the Irish Government, which would have been hostile to the landlords, and might have been expected to take every opportunity of encouraging repudiation in case of a quarrel between England and Ireland. What would have been the position of the British Government under such a Bill? Under such a Bill as that the British taxpayer would have had no security whatever. But not only was there no security under the Bill of 1886, there was not even the personal promise or responsibility of the Irish tenant for the re-payment of the money. In these points the Bill now before the House compares favourably with that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. The hon. Member for Cork has complained that money enough is not provided to buy out all the tenants, that only about one-quarter of them will come under the operation of the Bill, and that great dissatisfaction will be caused. That may be a fair criticism for Committee, and I hope the Government will consider whether the advances might not be restricted to the smaller tenants, in the first instance. But the objections taken by the hon. Member for Cork do not go to the root of the Bill; they only point to matters which can be dealt with in Committee. The hon. Member seems to ignore the fact that this measure is intended to be gradual in its operation, and may, if successful, be followed by others of a like character. It is utterly inconsistent on the part of gentlemen opposite, who were so eager a few years ago in favour of allotment and the right of the labourer to a portion of the soil, to oppose a Bill of this character. Under its provisions the British taxpayer will not suffer the loss of a farthing. I should like to know how hon. Members who oppose it can pose before their constituents as the true friends of the working classes. I have great pleasure in supporting the Second Reading of the Bill.

(7.55.) THE EARL OF CAVAN (Somerset, S.): I presume that if a stranger who visited this House during the debate on the Bill of 1886 were to enter it now he would be astonished at the change which has taken place in the interval. In 1886 the Liberal Party were all for Land Purchase, and Gentlemen opposite were against it. Now, those who sit on this side of the House are found arrayed against the land purchase scheme of a Conservative Government, whose Chief Secretary has become the powerful ally of those who wish to rid the country of the English landlord. I am opposed to the present Bill, though I do not consider it to be an unmitigated evil; on the contrary, there are three distinct benefits which I think may be secured from it. One would be the getting rid of a number of the landlords, an end which apparently the Chief Secretary is very anxious to secure; secondly, I think the Turbary Clauses, with the smallest possible change, will be very acceptable; and thirdly, the clauses dealing with long leases are, to my mind, admirable, and I wish the right hon. Gentleman every success in passing those portions of the Bill. But I object to the purchase provisions. There is no freedom of contract between the landlord and the tenant. The other day I asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he would withdraw the police from meetings of the tenants held for the discussion of the Bill. I was told that the police only attended when there was a fear of illegality. But illegality is a broad term as interpreted by Resident Magistrates in Ireland, and the Bill cannot be looked on with favour by the tenants, because no fair discussion of a measure like it can take place under the menace of the presence of police reporters. The landlords, of course, are allowed to discuss it without being so menaced. I have still another objection to the Bill. Thirty years ago, when I first began to take an interest in politics, I was always told by a relative who had been a Minister of the Crown that any Bill brought forward should carry on its face the recommendation that it sought to obtain—the greatest happiness of the greatest number. I think this Bill will produce the greatest misery, and I will endeavour to show how this will occur. It was estimated, when the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was before the country, that £200,000,000 would be required to buy up the whole of the land in Ireland; but, taking a moderate estimate, I say £160,000,000, so it is obvious that if only £33,000,000 is the sum which the Government are inclined to spend, then something like four or five landlords will not be bought out to every one that is. A great number of tenants will be disappointed, and possibly a great number of landlords. I am perfectly well aware that it is proposed that as money is paid in it will be paid out again; but let me take the illustration the right hon. Gentleman himself gave on introducing the Bill, that of a tenant paying £100 rent. That tenant enters into an arrangement with his landlord as explained by the Chief Secretary; for five years he pays £80 a year, and for 44 years £68, and at the end of that time he is owner of his farm. Well and good; the man is satisfied, and I suppose the landlord is satisfied. But just over the hedge there is another man who pays £100 rent and his landlord refuses to sell. Now, what are the feelings of that tenant towards his landlord as he contrasts his position with that of his neighbour? Do we not get very close to my proposition, the greatest misery to the greatest number? You start a new state of ill-feeling between tenant and landlord, and it is rather a serious matter. I presume under the Coercion Act it will be possible to keep these tenants in order. The landlord can go to the tenant and say to the tenant, "Pay me my £100 rent or Her Most Gracious Majesty's battering ram will knock the house about your ears and the whole force of the Coercion Act will be brought against you." These are strong arguments on the part of the landlord, but the tenant has no arguments whatever to use. The tenants cannot even combine. We have had the Home Secretary's opinion of combination; the right hon. Gentleman has shown that agricultural tenants cannot combine for their own protection like members of a Trades Union. The Irish tenant has no menace, no pressure to put the landlord. But, suppose this landlord, though he does not desire to sell, is a good landlord who has got on well with his tenants and is anxious to continue on good terms with them in the future, he is not impecunious, but has means at his disposal besides those he gets from his tenants. This landlord may go to his tenant and say, "rather than have a standing quarrel between us I will reduce your rent to £80 for five years, and then to £68 for 44 years, and so you will be on the same terms as your neighbour." Would the tenant be right in acceding to these terms? Certainly not; they are not nearly good enough, because there will be this distinction between the two positions, that he will, at the end of 49 years, be still a tenant, when his neighbour will be an owner. What, then, will be a fair compromise to make up for want of possession? Why a rent of £50 or £60, and the tenant will be badly advised if he accepts a higher rent than that. Well, suppose he accepts £50, and agrees to pay that instead of £100. He is in the happy position for the time being, on meeting his friend who is coming in on the Purchase Act, of showing how much better off for the time being he is. But suppose disasters come? Suppose distress comes as it came 10 years ago and may come again; then what will be the position of these two persons? The positions will be to a very great extent reversed. I can hardly imagine a more miserable position than that of the good landlord with little money at the bank, who desires to remain in Ireland, and who has not come to terms with his tenants under this Bill. And now a few words in reference to an important letter which has appeared in a leading newspaper from the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). The noble Lord seems to have been very fairly criticised on both sides. He addressed himself to persons who, in the language of Lord Granville, are persons of a cross-bench mind, and who, in the opinion of election agents, are of no use to anybody, who are not Liberals and not Conservatives, and of whom it is impossible to say which way they will lean. So deep is the dislike to this class that a name of contempt has been imported from the other side of the water, and they have been styled "mugwumps." But who are these with whom the noble Lord is dealing? They are those who turn out Governments and re-construct Cabinets. They are the people who, being neither Liberals or Conservatives, think for themselves on every question. They are a very important class, to my mind, after all the sarcasms poured upon them. These are the persons to whom I would address myself, persons of an open mind, and to these the noble Lord has addressed himself. I cannot go the length of all the noble Lord has said, but I can go with him in the advice he has given to the Government—advice, I am sorry to say, they will not accept. That advice is that this Bill should be dropped, and that the Government should bring forward a Local Government scheme on very broad principles, and that after that they should bring forward this Bill, or something like it, on a more representative basis, and they will carry it out with greater ease. That advice will not be taken. It would be presumptuous in me to suppose that the Government would take my advice when they have refused that of the noble Lord. But let the Government consult their Whips, those admirable officials who discharge their duties with so much courtesy and punctuality, and have so much knowledge of the position of parties. They will tell the Chief Secretary what, perhaps, he knows already, that it is more and more difficult to keep a House every year; that the further we get from the time when Members were in close connection with their constituents, it is more difficult to keep a House, and the difficulty increases as July approaches. Supposing there is great opposition to the Bill as a whole, then bring forward a Local Government Bill first, then deal with the Turbary Clauses and long lease clauses. The opposition to your Bill would not carry half the weight if the noble Lord's advice were taken. The Government would be in a stronger position, for it would be impossible for Members to resist the Bill at any great length, and I do not think they would resist it. Then bring forward the remainder of the Bill next Session, a Bill re-constructed on more popular lines. If they do that, the Government will lighten the Bill and will do something to show they realise the position in which they are now placed; they will do something to meet the demands of the Irish people, proceeding on a basis of popular representation with a Bill in more popular form. But if the Government think it is their duty to press forward this Bill, equally the Opposition have a duty, and that is to offer opposition to the Bill, not opposition of such a description as will provoke the angry comment of any reasonable man, not a factious opposition, but still an opposition that will go to the extent of questioning every line, every single word in a Bill which will act prejudicially to the greater interests of Ireland. (8.20.)

*(8.45.) Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I have to say that, in my opinion, the objections that have been offered to this Bill are exceedingly well-founded; and before coming to the chief points of objection I should like to offer a few remarks. The right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland has, singularly enough, invoked in support of this Bill an Irish Catholic newspaper; but, for my part, I cannot see what special authority that newspaper has to speak on the question, either for or against. The right hon. and learned Gentleman also quoted in favour of the Bill the opinions of that Body which the present Government have so stoutly insisted in describing as a criminal conspiracy, namely, the Land League. I would ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman was it not for their connection with that so-called criminal conspiracy that no fewer than eight Members of the Irish Party were accused of the most serious criminality, notwithstanding which the right hon. and learned Gentleman cites in defence of the measure now before the House the opinions of the Land League? It is quite certain that time brings about strange changes, and I must say that it has brought about nothing more strange than when we see the Irish Attorney General of the present Conservative Government quoting

in favour of a Government measure the opinions of the Irish Land League.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (continuing): If this Bill were to pass in its present form it would be the occasion of a large amount of discontent all over Ireland, and would only render the state of things much more unpleasant than at present, when, goodness knows, they are quite bad enough. I might not object to a scheme of purchase such as could be applied to all Ireland; but in that case it must be administered honestly and fairly, and by men in whom the tenants would have confidence. At any rate, some arrangement might be made by which, at least, one-half of them should be men in whom the tenants would have confidence. As it is at present, all the Courts in Ireland—the Land Courts and others—are administered by men who are notoriously in favour of the landlords, and I do not think it possible to get a Land Court scheme out of the present Government that will have the confidence of the Irish tenants; nor is there any probability of the Land Question in Ireland being settled by this measure. For it proposes to touch merely the fringe of the question, leaving the bulk of it untouched, while at the same time it exhausts Irish resources. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has referred to a speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in which, after referring to the landlords' combination, he said he would not object to a tenants' combination; but the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General added that it must be a legal combination. For my part, I doubt whether human ingenuity could devise a tenants' combination that would be recognised by the present Government as legal; and if it be possible to create such a combination, I would ask the Attorney General for Ireland to sketch for us a plan that would satisfy the Government. I am afraid, however, that the example furnished by the right hon. and learned Gentleman's predecessor, who is now on the Judicial Bench in Ireland, would operate as a warning of the danger attending the preparation of such a scheme; for the previous Attorney General for Ireland committed himself to an approval of the Plan of Campaign, a procedure which he found shortly afterwards had placed him in a very unfortunate position. It seems to me that one of the greatest objections to this Bill is that it leaves practically unlimited power to squeeze the tenant. This 20 years' purchase is not on the real net rent, but on the gross rent, less the taxes. The real net rent, allowing for costs of collection, bad debts, &c., would be at least 15 per cent less. The Government propose to give the landlord 20 years' purchase, and as much more as they can squeeze out of the tenant. To make matters worse, we have a land market which is entirely rigged. Sales, when they can be passed through the Land Courts, are at an entirely fictitious price. The prevailing prices are entirely fictitious. Consequently, we have a closed market, and in this state of things any sales forced now would be forced at artificial rates altogether. Nearly one-fifth of the estates of Ireland are in the Land Courts, and if the Government were to put those estates in the market they would, within a very short time, ascertain the value of land in Ireland, and would obtain valuable information for the purposes of this Bill. By the arrears of unjust rents, and by the eviction-made-easy clause of the Land Act of 1887, the tenants are now entirely at the mercy of the landlord, who can coerce them to agree to any terms he likes. Under these circumstances, if the Bill passed, the tenants would be coerced to pay exorbitant prices. Suppose there were two or three bad seasons, what would be the condition of things? Total inability to pay these exorbitant instalments. It is to meet that state of things, apparently, that these fictitious guarantees are piled up. The hon. Member for the Harrow Division spoke of the guarantees as the second line of defence; and he also said that the tenants' interest would not be counted in, and that it would be equal to the interest of the landlord. [MR. AMBROSE: Would be.] I understand I have not taken the hon. Gentleman amiss. He told us that the tenant's interest would be an additional guarantee, and that it would be equal to the interest of the landlord. That would certainly be the case under circumstances different from those which prevail at the present time. If the tenants had not been cheated of the benefits of the Healy clause of the Land Act of 1881, there would have been a different state of things now prevailing. What was the decision of the Irish Appeal Court? That a tenant's interest in his improvements was exhausted after 20 years, and that then they became the property of the landlord. There is the old saying that "what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." Why is the landlord's interest in his property not exhausted after 20 years' possession? As the law stands now, I do not think it can be controverted that the rent is fixed upon the tenant's interest as well as the landlord's interest. Where is the property in Ireland with regard to which the landlord's interest alone is worth the present rent? The thing is altogether absurd. Rents at the present time are fixed upon both the landlord's interest and the tenant's. Tenants' interest would be paid for under this scheme as well as the landlords', but the scheme of the Chief Secretary is obviously framed to deprive the tenants of the benefits of the Healy clause of the Land Act. Will the right hon. Gentleman re-enact the Healy clause without ambiguities? If he will do that, we shall have a *bonâ fide* security for the taxpayer, but I am afraid that without it there will be no such security. And here I would say to the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Ambrose) that before he ventures again to offer the House his opinions on the Irish Land Question, he should inform his mind on the subject. My own impression is that if the Healy clause were really operative in the interest of the tenants, the tenants would not care three farthings about a Purchase Bill. That clause is—or ought to be—worth all your Land Acts and Purchase Bills put together, and if the Government were to set about to restore it to the tenants honestly, fairly, and securely, and have it administered by men in whom the tenants could repose confidence, there would be little need for a Purchase Scheme. This Bill does not go far enough to settle the Land Question in Ireland. It keeps clear of the real trouble. We were told that the Ashbourne Acts and the Light Railways Act were to improve the condition of Ireland, to restore peace and harmony, and to render the people contented, but as yet we have seen none of these beneficial results flow from them. The Ashbourne Acts have not been carried out where they are most required. We do not find that they have been applied to the Clanricarde estate, or to any of the estates where these bitter struggles have been going on between landlord and tenant. What then, I ask, is the use of this Bill? Will it apply to such estates as the Clanricarde? If men like Lord Clanricarde refuse to sell, what will be the use of the Bill—to what purpose will it have been passed and will the money of the British taxpayer have been given? We have to look at the Bill from that point of view. It seems to me that the sole object of this Bill, and the other measures to which I have referred, is to put money into the pocket of the landowners, but as to pacifying Ireland that idea would not appear to have entered the mind of the Government at all. This measure is not desired by the representatives of the Irish people. It is a big scheme of jobbery you want to try and force on us, and you wish to do it in spite of the views of the representatives of Ireland, who object to your allowing the landlords to pocket double the value of their interest in the land—to take, in fact, both their own and the tenants' interest. And having forced these dishonest terms on the tenants the Government provide a guarantee for the security of the British taxpayer. What is that security?—The grants in aid. On what grounds would the Government deprive the Irish people of these grants in aid? Simply to enable a fourth of the tenants of Ireland to pay exorbitant prices to the landlords for their land. And if they deprived Ireland of these grants what would result? Why, the effect of that fraud upon the Irish taxpayer would be that we should have to close the lunatic asylums, and the workhouses, and leave the school teachers without their salaries. And to make matters worse, the Grand Juries and the Lord Lieutenant would have power to levy certain rates in support of the guarantee. The powers you propose to confer on the Lord Lieutenant are not very dissimilar from those exercised by Charles I. in this country, which were the beginning of his trouble with the Parliament and which, in the end, lost him his life. Would any sane man suggest that the people of Ireland are likely to permit a levy of any such kind to be made by the Lord Lieutenant on his own motion? Certainly not. I do not think that a force ten times as great as that you at present possess in Ireland would be sufficient to enable the Lord Lieutenant to levy such a tax. And what would be the position if the new purchasers in Ireland—these men for whom you run all these risks—became defaulters in bad times? Why, the whole of the people would suffer because of the default of a few, and the position of those who purchased under the Bill would become so unpleasant that you would not only have a strike against these instalments but against rents all round. I believe this Bill is calculated to produce great mischief and confusion in Ireland, and I further believe that, under coercion, it will not be fairly administered. As a matter of fact, the Government, knowing that their term of office is not likely to last very long, desire to do the best they can for their friends, and, certainly, if they are able to carry this measure, they will be doing a splendid stroke, getting for the landlords double the value of their interest. As to the Land Act of 1881, to which so much reference has been made, my belief is that that measure, including the Healy clause, would have gone very far to settle the Land Act if it had been honestly administered, and if that which no one could have foreseen, namely, the sudden change in agricultural values, had not taken place. In my opinion the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has never received the credit he deserves for that Act, seeing that it would have gone very far indeed in the direction of settling the Land Question in Ireland if the Healy clause had been honestly administered, and it had been recognised that the interest of the tenant in his holding was equal to that of the landlord. The restoration of that clause in its integrity would satisfy the great bulk of the Irish tenants, and save the time of the Government and of Parliament, always provided that the Land Act were administered by those in whom the tenants could have confidence. It is no use handing the administration of the Act over to the enemies of the tenants, and, for the sake of fair-play, at least one-half of the Body administering the Act should be men enjoying the confidence of the tenants. The Land Court at the present time is manned by the landlords' men, and before you pass any Bill like this you should clearly comprehend the true value of the tenants' interest in the land. To ascertain that value the present Land Court is incapable. It seems to me that this Bill betrays an incapacity or an unwillingness—I am afraid an incapacity—to grapple with this question, and whilst it only touches the fringe of the subject, it proposes, under certain contingencies, to swamp the whole of our Irish local resources. It leaves the claims of three-fourths of the tenants unsettled, which would produce endless discontent, and altogether the measure is not one to which we, in this quarter of the House, can offer any support.

*(9.21.) MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): The hon. Member who has just sat down used words which fell from his leader a while ago, namely, that there is no need for a Purchase Bill in Ireland. That is certainly not what I have always understood as to the wishes and desires of the Irish tenants, and I must say I regret that the hon. Gentleman and his leader have decided to oppose this measure. I hoped that the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian on the introduction of the Bill would have had a greater effect in all quarters of this House, and that all parties would have joined in support of a Bill embodying a principle which all parties have adopted, namely, the conversion of the tenants into owners. Hon. Members below the Gangway have always held that those who till the soil should own it. I cannot think that the hon. Member for Cork, in speaking as he has done this evening, has represented the true feelings of the tenant farmers of Ireland. The hon. Member has advanced no reasons for opposing the Bill; but he admits that the Land Act of 1887 has been of use. Yet when that Act was under discussion, and the Act of 1881, the hon. Member for Cork and his Party walked out of the House without voting. Hon. Members from Ireland, when they cross St. George's Channel, often claim credit for the passing of Bills which they have opposed in the House. The hon. Member for Cork gave one reason for

opposing the Bill with which I have a certain sympathy, namely, that only one part of the tenants would benefit from the Bill. But that difficulty exists at present under the Ashbourne Act, and the Bill before the House is at least one step towards removing that difficulty. For my own part, I wish that all parties had joined in urging upon the Government the necessity of making the present measure a final one. Certainly agitation will continue as long as a certain number of tenants are excluded from becoming owners. The right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir G. Trevelyan) brought in a Purchase Bill in 1885, and he, with Lord Spencer and the Member for Newcastle, has always declared that the Land Question must be settled before a Home Rule Bill can be passed. It is, therefore, rather strange to find the right hon. Gentleman opposing the present Bill. The hon. Member for Cork declares that the Land Question in Ulster is in a normal condition; but if the hon. Member were to contest one of the agricultural constituencies of Ulster on that cry he would soon find out his mistake. The Ulster tenants want a Purchase Bill, and one on the lines of the present measure. The hon. Member for Cork further said that he would apply the Bill only to tenants paying rent under £50, and would strike out grazing tenants; but this would only aggravate the acknowledged difficulty of the existing situation. For whilst a tenant who paid £55 a year rent could not be an owner, one who paid £45 a year could. The hon. Member is prepared to strike out tenants in grazing districts, and that also would be again creating two classes of tenants, and preventing one altogether from realising their hopes and wishes. But it was when the hon. Member for Cork came to deal with the congested districts that I was most disappointed. I was surprised to hear him say that he had forgotten to speak of the congested districts, for they have been the cause of much of the trouble in Ireland. The question in the West of Ireland is not a Land Question; and therefore any Bill dealing with the congested districts must be founded, to some extent, on public works, and follow the Light Railways Bill of last year. The hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill said the landlords would receive large sums; but why not? I do not view this Bill as a landlord's Bill, but as a measure to put the tenants in possession of their own holdings. If a landlord is in possession of a large estate, he is entitled to receive the value of it, whether it is large or small. Other people have mortgages, whether their estates are large or small, the mortgages have to be paid off; therefore, it does not follow that large amounts will go into the pockets of the landowners. As to the London Companies, I think it is right that they should sell, and I have always thought that absentee landlords should be required to sell. The London Companies sell, and I hope a Committee of this House will investigate the matter, and see that these companies do not run off with all the swag, as some hon. Gentlemen put it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division made a statement with regard to the sale by the Drapers Company. There is no doubt the proceeding was very disreputable. I believe the purchase amount was fixed upon the rents paid, instead of upon the fair rents fixed by the Court, in some cases, and no doubt the company did attempt to get more out of the tenants than they should have done. But the great point is that the Land Commission refused to ratify the sale. It will always be open to the Land Commission to refuse to ratify a sale an any estate where force is used. Then the question of security has been raised. I always contend that the security in Ireland is very safe, because the tenants own part of the holdings. In the past, instalments of purchase have been paid very regularly. The Attorney General for Ireland has mentioned the glebe purchasers; but he has not mentioned the purchasers under the Act of 1870. I do not think the latter purchasers have paid their instalments so regularly as glebe purchasers; but it must be borne in mind that, in their case only, two-thirds or three-fourths of the money was advanced, and they had to go for the rest into the open market to borrow at a usurious rate of interest—8 or 9, or even more per cent. That is completely remedied under this Act. Then we have heard of repudiation, and I regretted to hear of it. I believe that Irish tenants who go voluntarily into the Land Court will not repudiate; it is impossible that after paying 80 per cent. for the first five years they will render themselves liable to be turned out of their holdings. In the North of Ireland the tenant farmers would treat with scorn the idea that they would attempt to repudiate. The hon. Member for Cork explained a scheme of his own. I confess the scheme is difficult to understand; indeed, it seems to me that all it does is to complicate the situation. The hon. Gentleman proposes that only half of the purchase money should be given by the State, and that the landlords should still remain. That simply amounts to the introduction of a third party. Such a scheme does not seem at all workable, and will, I think, be rejected by the hon. Member's own Colleagues. The hon. Member for the City of Cork has spoken of putting an end to the turmoil in Ireland. It is because I believe that this Bill is a step towards putting an end to the turmoil in Ireland, and because it gives a considerable benefit to the Irish tenants, that I give it my hearty support.

(9.35.) MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I do not rise for the purpose of attempting to reply to anything that has been said by the hon. Member (Mr. Lea). I am not inclined to enter into the internecine fight between the Irish Members. This question is not simply an Irish question; and I think it is full time that a Representative of another nationality, and especially a Member of the House who was not a Member of the House at the time that many were committed irretrievably on the one side or the other upon the Land Purchase question, should be allowed for a moment to interpose a word. In opposing this Bill I find my duty is an exceedingly simple one. One of the purposes for which I was sent here was to oppose any such Bill. At the last election my constituents were, and they are now, of opinion that if Ireland is fit to be intrusted with the management of its affairs generally, it is certainly fit to be trusted with its land affairs; that an Irish Parliament, necessarily possessed of more minute knowledge and greater time to deal with such a question, would deal with it with more information and more skill than the Imperial Parliament, and certainly not with less wisdom and justice. In that opinion I most heartily concur. There may be leading Members of the Liberal Party—I do not include the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who I believe has not committed himself to any statement of the kind—who are of opinion that the Imperial Parliament ought to settle the land question before allowing an Irish Parliament to commence its duties. That is not at all the opinion of Scottish Liberalism. The arguments that have convinced them that Ireland ought to have a Parliament at all, have also convinced them that one of the first and most prominent difficulties of Ireland ought also to be one of the first and most prominent duties of an Irish Parliament. Holding that view myself, I unhesitatingly maintain that this question ought not to be before the Imperial Parliament at all, and ought to be reserved for an Irish Parliament. But the question is before this Parliament, and that being so I am none the less pledged to oppose it on its merits. I am bound to oppose any proposal for beneficially paying off the Irish landlords at the expense or the risk of the British taxpayer. In proposing his Land Bill of 1886, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian said that he considered it as a matter of honour to offer the Irish landlords the boon of the measure, because the deeds of the Irish landlords were our own deeds. But in Scotland we do not see this obligation of honour; because whilst we see that the deeds of the Irish landlord class are undoubtedly the deeds of the English landlord class, we do not see that they are the deeds of the British people, who at the time of those deeds were unenfranchised—at all events, the Scottish people were. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian admits that at the time those deeds were committed the whole representation of Scotland in the Imperial Parliament was in the hands of 4,000 or 5,000 persons; and that, therefore, as he put it, the Scottish people had no responsibility for the dreadful history of the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. I feel, therefore, bound to oppose this Bill, which, while to some extent it is a tenants' temptation Bill, is also a landlords' relief Bill at British risk. But I go further than this and maintain that all parties in this House are by implication pledged against this Bill, and before dealing with its proposals are bound to go and obtain a new mandate from their constituents. The last General Election was, no doubt, a Home Rule election in one of its aspects, but it was also a Land Purchase election as well and as much. Hon. and right hon. Members opposite were not content with raising one hobgoblin at that time; they employed two of these scooped-out turnips with lighted candles inside, shedding a ghastly glare from eye-holes on dark evenings to scare village populations; and of the two I think the Land Purchase turnip was quite as successful as the Home Rule turnip. I remember the struggle we had to lay the Land Purchase spectre. With a copy of the Land Purchase Bill in each hand, hon. Members opposite went raving, reciting, and maddening through the land, proving from a hundred platforms, to their intense satisfaction and to the intense consternation of the assemblages of old women, and children of both sexes respectively, that possibly since the Flood there never had been so dangerous a cataclysm as the introduction of the Land Purchase Bill of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. We were told that the £50,000,000 would inevitably swell out to £200,000,000; that, through bad harvests, declension of prices, and the competition of American and Indian corn-growers, and other contingencies, the tenants would become unable to pay their instalments; and then, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham particularly put it, the working men of England, Scotland, and of Ireland would become Irish landlords, and would have to extract non existent rents from impecunious Irish tenants at the point of the bayonet—a situation so tragic that it led the right hon. Member for West Birmingham to appeal to their parental, and even their grandparental, sentiments, and to warn them that their children and their children's children would be loaded to all time with the intolerable burden of an enormous addition to the National Debt. I hold in my hand a tract, published by what called itself The Liberal Committee for the Maintenance of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. The tract was distributed in its thousands, as I believe the proper phrase is, amongst what were then my future constituents. It took the form of a series of questions, some of which I should like to read to the House. Question No. 6 was—

> "The Government Irish Home Rule and Land Bills will cost at the very lowest £120,000,000—it may cost as much as £200,000,000. Where is the money to come from?—From the English and Scotch and Welsh. Will it ever be repaid?—Never. Who will suffer?—The English, the Scotch, and the Welsh. How will they suffer?—By paying more taxes."

And then there was the statement—

> "If you pay more taxes you will have to pay more dearly for your tea, your coffee, your beer, your spirits, your tobacco, your houses and lands, and everything that is taxed; which nobody can deny."

It was in vain the followers of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian pointed out to them that the Land Purchase Bill was not a logically necessary adjunct of the Home Rule proposal; that it was only inseparably necessary in the right hon. Gentleman's own mind; that he had told them it was as dead as the clauses of the Home Rule Bill itself; and that he had told them weeks before that the sands in the glass were rapidly running out; and that although all of us had heard of such a thing as an eight-days clock we had never heard of a six weeks sand glass. It was throwing words away. They maintained that the right hon. Gentleman was an "old Parliamentary hand" getting older and more Parliamentary, and more handy every day. They said he was the master of ambiguous phraseology, not entirely to be trusted, and, in short, that he was the "wickedest man on earth" ["Hear, hear!" *and laughter*]—I am speaking in inverted commas—and that having once said it was a point of honour, he would, from the very untrustworthiness and wickedness of the man, stick to his point and reintroduce the Bill at the earliest possible opportunity. That reasoning, if I may so degrade a respectable term, did not much succeed in Scotland; in one or two soft places, such as Inverness and Fife Burghs, it was successful. But it was extensively successful in more southern latitudes, and that success, like everything else, was bought at a price, and the price of it was certain obligations and responsibilities upon hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. When hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite come here and propose to support a Bill which, if the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was dangerous, is *à fortiori* infinitely more dangerous, a Bill whose £43,000,000 must, on the showing of even so tooth-and-nail a defender as the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), expand to meet the purchase of all the properly purchaseable land in Ireland, and which, by the logic which was applied to the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, cannot stop short of, at all events, £200,000,000, a Bill which, instead of putting the tenant in the position of a friendly debtor to a Government of his own race and choice, makes him, by force, a tribute payer to a foreign and, as he will reckon, a conquering and a hostile power; a Bill, moreover, which for a full and a reasonable security substitutes one which is insufficient even if it were strong, but which, instead of being strong, is fantastically and ridiculously flimsy. I say that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, in acting as they are, are breaking faith with the country, and they are bound, before ever they consider such a proposal as this, to consult the country and get themselves liberated from the vows which they so solemnly, or in some cases so lightly, took during the last General Election. Even if it were not so, I submit that the proposal is in itself, and on its own merits, at once so novel and gigantic that the country ought to be consulted upon it before anything further is done with it. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, in his speech in introducing the Bill, implied that everybody is agreed about the propriety of an occupying ownership. I question so sweeping an assertion. I am of opinion that the great proportion of the electorate believe that if a kingdom is changing hands the nation to whom in reality and in principle it belongs ought, in some substantial manner, to have its interests and its rights recognised. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian did this. I maintain that in this case a march ought not to be stolen upon the country, but the country ought to be consulted as to whether it is willing to make this new settlement of its heritage, or of a great part of its heritage. But the great objection I have to this Bill is that it proposes to perform a great act of State favouritism by using the public credit—that great financial power that has been created by the enterprise and industry of the community at large—to endow a very limited group of Irish landlords and tenants, without any call or justification whatever for such a partial and one-sided proceeding. I ask, upon general principles, why should not all of us who need it get assistance from British credit in our different difficulties in our different spheres of life? I should myself be delighted to acquire the fee simple of my house on such terms, and why should I not have such a privilege as well as the Duke of Abercorn or any of his colleagues? I say nothing but overwhelming public necessity, not to be otherwise met, or a stupendous public advantage not to be otherwise attained, ever could justify such a departure from equity of treatment. How is this proposal to be justified? What is the great advantage suppposed to be gained to justify this deviation into Socialism? Mainly, we are told the advantage is that it will convert the Irish nation from their feeling of discontent towards England and Dublin Castle Government, that it will, in fact, cure them of Home Rule. Well, to many of us that does not present itself as a great temptation, because we are not afraid of Home Rule, but, at the same time, if Ireland were persuaded in this way to dispense with Home Rule, and to rest satisfied with Dublin Castle Government, we, on democratic principles, ought to be glad to satisfy her and be released from a weary struggle. But, at all events, this is undoubtedly the aim of the Government in introducing this measure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us the proposal of the Government is to pacify Ireland, to destroy the power of the National League, and to maintain the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. And the *Times*, alternately your *protégé* and patron, tells us also that, by settling a large number of small owners all over Ireland, the agitator will be deprived of his functions and income, or, in other words, by such a measure as this you will be able to drive the national spirit into acceptance of Dublin Castle Government. But I thought you had been long telling us that the Irish nation are in that condition already; that your brave and bi-metallic Chief Secretary, by his plank beds and battering rams, his bullets, his bludgeons and his bayonets, by his crowbars and murderous police, had succeeded in calming down the rebels and making them perfectly contented with Dublin Castle and the English Garrison. Yet I find that, though you have over and over again declared that you would never never never give in to national violence, you are thinking, by this Bill, of distributing a *largesse* of some £43,000,000 among these cruel seditious Nationalists, in order to purchase that affection which you find you have not been able to enforce. I do wish you would frame some consistent story, and stick to it. Tell as many stories as you like, but, for the sake of the stories themselves and the father of them, do make the stories consistent with each other, do not have them fighting it out openly on the Queen's highway like this. I must say I cannot understand this alternative policy of kicks and coax, of cane and candy, of stroking the cat with the hair on the one side and against the hair on the other side, and imagining that thus you can soothe the animal. The coaxing will be undone by the kicks, the candy will not be sweet in the mouth so long as the smart of the cane is bitter on the back, and the feelings of the cat will not be soothed by your double action. Besides, if you think it worth your while to buy reconciliation by measure in this way, why spend your money upon Ulster, why not economise your funds, why spend them upon a people who, we understand, are so perfectly loyal that they are ready to die in the last ditch for what they call the Union in the cheerful society of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson)? Why should the Duke of Abercorn—I only mention him as a representative of a class—why should he be given a quarter of a million of money, or have the opportunity of acquiring that sum in this way, when that nobleman is a leader of anti-Home-Rule loyalty? By getting him out of the country you turn out one of your strongest defenders from your citadel. I am not surprised when, as I am told, your *Dublin Express*, which, I understand, is one of the keenest organs of your party, is down upon you for your folly and falsity. After all, will this great land bait be effectual for the end you contemplate? Will it be successful in converting Home Rulers to an anti-Home-Rule position? You must remember that the land question is not by any means the only cause of the national sentiment in the minds of Irishmen, but even supposing it were? A little metaphysics must come in here for the consideration of the question. I am sorry the Chief Secretary is not here; he is himself a metaphysician, and he, I think, would understand what I am going to say, which is this: Where a cause has given independent existence to an effect, that effect may subsequently go on existing although you may have removed the cause. If a mad dog bites a man, I suppose that will be the cause of the man having hydrophobia, but that hydrophobia has an independent existence, and the man cannot be cured of the hydrophobia by the shooting of the mad dog; the removal of the cause comes in a little too late. So, in the same way, although the land difficulty has been the original cause of the existence of the Home Rule sentiment in the Irish breast, you are a trifle too late in coming to settle the land question, and the Home Rule sentiment may survive in a man. Even though he become the owner, instead of the tenant, of his farm, it does not follow that he will be converted at once to a profound affection for Dublin Castle rule. A young lion who has once tasted blood is not very easily put off with grass. If I were an Irish Home Ruler and had acquired the ownership of my holding on these easy terms, the reflection that would cross my mind would be that to be a Home Ruler was a profitable occupation, and I should be probably encouraged to persevere in my opinions, and find it useful to pursue the Oliver Twistian policy of asking for more. That certainly seems to have been the opinion of the Land League leaders, who have been found by the Special Commission to have promoted the Land League for the purpose of driving out Irish landlords, not because they are landlords, but because they are the English Garrison in Ireland, and anticipating that by substituting Nationalist tenants for Orange landlords. The anti-Nationalist cause would be weakened by the withdrawal of its strongest defenders, and the Nationalist cause would be proportionately strengthened by adding more power to Nationalist elbows. If that is so I do not think you are likely to get much for your money, in which state of circumstances, I hold, we might have all had a share if there is going to be this distribution on the strength of the national credit. It may be said that the new element of prosperity that will be given to the tenants who are to be made landlords or owners must, at all events, count as a great gain, but I very much doubt it. Forty-nine years are a long time, and no one knows what may happen during that period. The provisions in the Bill cannot secure the British taxpayer against misfortune overtaking the tenant, from a fall in the price of agricultural produce, the result of American competition, or a succession of bad seasons; so that long before the 49 years fixed for the repayment of the advances, the tenant may become a ruined man and utterly incapable of keeping up his payments. But even supposing that this matter could be passed over, I want further to emphasise the point I have already alluded to, and that is that so far from this measure doing good, it promises to produce a new and unheard of amount of evil, that will infinitely outweigh any good it can conceivably effect. Part of the evil effect has already been recognised by the hon. Member for Cork, namely, that though £43,000,000 may be distributed, there would still be three-fourths of the tenants of Ireland not participating in the tempting advantages professed to be afforded by the Bill. Now, we have been told, by such an authority as the hon. Member for South Tyrone, that an Irish tenant will go through fire and water to secure a bit of land. Well, but what are these three-fourths of the tenants of Ireland to do when they see themselves excluded from the opportunity of obtaining this land under the proposals in the Bill? We have no alternative before us. Then there will be either deep discontent, breaking out into turbulence and outrage, and possibly into violence against the landlords, worse than any we have ever known in our time, or we shall be compelled to buy up at once the whole of Ireland, and then what becomes of the boasted protection which you profess to the British taxpayer? The whole pretence of security is gone when you extend the purchase beyond the sum you have fixed. What becomes of your ingeniously contrived security, with its cash and contingent departments divided under heads and sub-heads? The true way of looking at the proposed security to the taxpayer is to see how it will work when the worst comes to the worst. It is no good to have a fair weather security; we must have one that will stand wind and water. Suppose that in some great crisis there is a general strike against rent. Why then you cannot, as was well said by the hon. Member for Cork in a memorable epigram, "You can't crowbar half-a-million of people." You may crowbar half-a-dozen and rejoice in it, as you have been in the habit of doing. But, say the Government, we do not want to use the crowbar, we do not need to evict, we can call on the county to rate itself in order to pay the debts of these defaulting tenants. But surely that is a most unjust, a most oppressive proposal; surely justice goes for something still. To make a whole county pay for debts of a part of the inhabitants in the contraction of which debts they had no voice! Surely the apostles of law and order will admit there is something irregular there. The Government say that whether the proposal is just or unjust it will be effectual, because it will bring public opinion to bear upon the defaulters. Public opinion, however, cannot get blood out of a stone nor money out of an insolvent's pocket. The counties will resist such a demand, and will refuse to tax themselves to pay these debts. Ah! say the Government, with a triumphant—I was going to say sneer, but I have no desire to be uncivil—well, say the Government in reply, with a triumphant consciousness, in that case we can fall back on our security. Now, I just want to test how this will work out, and I will occupy similar ground to that taken up by the Chancellor of the Exchequer when critcising the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. What, said the right hon. Gentleman, are Irish Home Rule Judges, Home Rule Magistrates, and Home Rule Police to have their salaries stopped after money has been sent to meet these liabilities? And, in like manner, I ask how are your securities to work should the worst come to the worst? You will be in a position, should the counties stand out against the rate, to say to the counties, "If you will not pay other people's debts then we will stop your road money, and if you wish to travel at all you shall proceed along the worst conceivable roads, and over the most tumble-down bridges; if that will not bring you to your senses, then we will stop your Poor Law money and you will have to turn out your paupers to die on the road side; if that will not do we will stop the workhouse schoolmasters' and mistresses' money, with the result that the country will be over-run with 'young barbarians all at play;' if that will not do we will stop the industrial schools money, which will empty the reformatories, and you will have the boys and girls from these establishments larking about all over the country, and giving you a lively time; if that will not bring you to reason then we will stop the national school money, and so your own children will grow up in ignorance; and if that does not make you see the reasonableness of paying other people's debts, then we will stop the grants for your pauper lunatics, and you will have this class roaming about all over the shires, like beasts of prey, perhaps throttling you and causing you other trifling inconveniences when they meet you in out-of-the-way places; if that does not bring you to reason then we will stop the money for workhouse doctors and medicine, and then some of you will be in the happy position of knowing that some of your relatives have been removed to the outside of the workhouses, dying from want of nourishment and medical attendance; if still you will not conform to our reasonable view, then we will stop your Public Health Officers' money, and then your towns and villages will get into an irretrievably insanitary state, and you will most probably catch typhoid fever, and serve you right for not seeing the ridiculous unreasonableness of not being willing to pay other people's debts." This is no caricature of the security that is proposed by Her Majesty's Government in this Bill. I am simply interpreting it on the lines of the interpretation laid down in the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and I ask, on the lines of that interpretation, whether there was ever anything more cruel seen out of the history of the

Spanish Inquisition, or anything more absurd heard of outside farcical comedy? What it reminds me of, at the moment, is the practice of barbarous military chiefs in ancient times who, by accident or arrangement, had secured as hostages or captives, the brothers, sisters, father, mother, or children of some opposing chief, and who then sent proposals to their opponents to submit or they would begin "and do, and do, and do," beginning with the father and going down to the youngest child, killing each as their enemy still refused to submit. This enforcement of this security reminds me of this. It seems to me to have been conceived with a combination of the characteristics of Torquemada and Mr. Toole. Do you suppose it would ever be possible to work out such a security? It is an unworkable security, and in a financial Bill that is completely damnatory and settles its character and ought to settle its fate. You have brought forward a financial measure, and you have included in it a security that you would be the laughing-stock of the civilised world if you attempted to put into execution. Consequently, it is no use discussing the Bill further as a financial measure. Because the Bill ought never to have been submitted to the House, because we are pledged against a Bill of this kind, and because it should not be passed before the nation has had an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it, because I believe it is dangerous and mischievous, I have no hesitation in voting against the Second Reading.

*(10.30.) MR. J. A. BRIGHT (Birmingham, Central): I should like to claim the indulgence of the House for a few minutes while I address it for the first time, and explain my reasons for the vote I am about to give. The speech to which the House has just listened has raised the debate from the dulness which has hitherto characterised it—a dulness which, I think, has struck everyone. I shall not attempt to reply to the grotesque similes and illustrations of the last speaker. As I was passing through the Lobby a few minutes ago I heard a remark which I am sure was not uttered out of any disrespect to you, Sir; it was to the effect that debates were always dull when Mr. Speaker was not in the chair. Well, Sir, I do not take that to be the reason for the dulness of this debate. In my

opinion it is an unreal debate. When I heard the speech of the hon. Member for Cork I came to the conclusion that the Bill would be sure to pass, and that the hon. Member would not be able to carry all his followers with him into the Lobby against it. The hon. Member began by saying that the Government had admitted that 20 per cent. was a just reduction of rents in Ireland. As far as I am aware no such opinion has been expressed. It is generally thought by the Unionist Members that reductions have gone quite far enough, and that the people are getting fair value for their money. What the Government has said is that 20 per cent. reduction is an enormous boon to the tenants, and one which they would not be likely to refuse. I do not think the hon. Member for Cork and his friends will be able to deprive the people of this boon. When I was in Ireland, lately, I had some talk with a peasant, who said that his landlord had offered to sell him his farm. When asked whether he thought the terms were fair, the man said he thought they were, and when questioned why he had not bought his farm he explained that "Them as knows better than us told us not." I suppose that "them as knows better" sit on this side of the House below the Gangway. The hon. Member said this Bill would only settle one quarter of the land question; that in Ulster it is not necessary to settle it at all; and that in the other parts of the country it is only 55 per cent. which wants settling. Well, by reducing the question to these dimensions we get very nearly to the £40,000,000 which, according to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, is the outside limit of the Bill. The hon. Member for Cork proposes that the benefits of the Bill should only be extended to tenants of farms with a rental of over £50. In that respect I am disposed to agree with the hon. Member. The richer tenants do not require help of this kind. The hon. Member proposes to exclude Ulster, as I understood him. But the same laws prevail in Ulster as elsewhere, and if the Ulster men have succeeded in establishing a tenant-right it is in consequence of their superior intelligence and persistence, and if the people in other parts of Ireland had been equally persistent they could have established in their own districts customs such as those which prevail in Ulster. The hon. Member for Cork says that £166,000,000 will be wanted for the purposes of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian brought in a Bill which it was estimated would require £150,000,000, and I believe the hon. Member for Cork voted for that Bill. [*Home Rule cries of* "No!"] Well, the hon. Member supported it. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman was compulsory. [Mr. John Morley: No.] Well, there was certainly some compulsion about it. As to the Bill only affecting one-quarter of the tenancies, it is not necessary to deal with all at once; and if the measure works satisfactorily, the remaining three-quarters will have their chance in good time. It is said the richest landowners have walked off with an enormous sum of money. But they have not; they are still there. Anyhow, the land is there and the purchasers have it. I cannot understand this objection to the Ashbourne Act. I have always understood that it is held desirable by hon. Members below the Gangway to break up the large estates. Surely it is better that the land should be in the hands of the people who live on it than in the hands of absentees. We have been told that, thanks to the struggles of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, the powers by which tenants have been oppressed in the past have been removed. If there is now no oppression is it not strange that we should hear of cases like that of the Ponsonby Estate? Now, we are told that it is desired that landlords should stay in Ireland; is it because they are wanted to subscribe to various objects? At one time the English garrison in Ireland was denounced in every possible way; now, apparently, it is sought to retain them there. For instance, we have the hon. Member for Cork holding up the landlord to commiseration on the ground that his £40 a year will be reduced to £27 10s. But out of the £40 the landlord probably has to pay rates, and he is in danger of his money passing through the hands of the friends of hon. Members below the Gangway and the promoters of the Plan of Campaign. If, according to the hon. Member for Cork, the landlord is not getting too much, who is getting too much? I cannot see where the hardship comes in. I cannot understand the proposition of the hon. Member for Cork, and I doubt whether the hon. Member himself understands it. In several papers lately the Chief Secretary for Ireland has been accused of bringing in a Land Bill prepared by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I know nothing about that, but it did strike me that the speech of the hon. Member for Cork had been prepared by the hon. Member for North Longford, and that the hon. Member for Cork had only had an opportunity of reading it half an hour before he rose to speak. As far as I could make out the hon. Member's proposition, it was that the landlords of Ireland should be given an opportunity of borrowing money at 2¾ per cent. in order to pay off mortgages bearing interest at the rate of 6 per cent. If any such proposition had been made by a Unionist Member there would have been a tremendous outcry, and we should have been told it was a proposal to relieve men of troubles which they had brought on themselves by squandering their money. The fact is, the opposition to this Bill is altogether unreal. I have lately read an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which it was said:—

> "We all dislike the Bill and desire to injure the Government; but when we consider why we dislike it, we are all at sixes and sevens."

It was another case of—

> "I do not love thee, Doctor Fell,
> The reason why I cannot tell."

In fact, all sections of the House are pledged to peasant proprietorship. It has been proclaimed, not from Dan to Beersheba, but from Mid Lothian to Cork. Five objections have been taken to the Bill by the hon. Member for Cork. I think he might have stated a sixth, that the Bill had not been brought in by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. I have been told that two or three days ago there appeared in the *Daily News* an article quoting a letter by my father, and said to be against the Ashbourne Act. I have not had an opportunity of seeing that letter; but I hope I may, without any want of good taste, say that in his last days my father frequently spoke of the Ashbourne Act. The Liberal Party was then opposing an extension of the Act, and my father said to me, "It is the only thing that appears to me to have done any good." The opposition to this Bill will not, I think, be carried very far, for I do not think that hon. Gentlemen above and below the Gangway will dare to oppose it altogether. They would, if they did, be judged out of their own mouths every minute of the debate. The opposition is not to the details, but to the spirit of the Bill, and it is an opposition to putting the land into the hands of peasant proprietors. If the Bill were passed, and there were a strike against rent, it would be caused by public opinion; and if that were so, it is only right that the public should bear the cost. For my own part, I have a better idea of the people of Ireland than their own Representatives seem to have. I believe that Irishmen always wish to pay their debts if they are not interfered with by people who wish them to do otherwise. In the past they have justly and regularly paid money borrowed for purposes connected with the land, and until I see it I will not believe that the whole Irish nation is going to show itself demoralised by efforts which may be made to lead it into evil courses. I hope that hon. Members on this side of the House will think better of the matter and will not oppose the Second Reading, but will content themselves—at all events, the moderate among them—by endeavouring to amend those propositions which they think wrong. I cordially support the Bill.

(10.50.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): We have all of us listened with great interest to the maiden speech in this House of an hon. Member who possesses such historic associations; but I must confess I heard with great astonishment his assertion that the debate was unreal. I can, on the part of some hon. Members who sit on these Benches, promise him that the Bill will meet with very strong opposition, and that we are not at all nervous as to what the outside public may think. The hon. Member tells us that we ought to be almost afraid to vote against the Bill, and that if we did vote against it our consciences would rise in accusation against us. Now I was not in the House when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian brought in his Bill in 1886, but, if one thing more than another lost the Liberal Party the General Election of that year, it was the strong antagonism of the British electors to the Land Bill rather than to the Home Rule Bill, while the strongest parts of the election addresses of hon.

and right hon. Gentlemen opposite were contained in their denunciation of the Land Bill. The honoured father of the Member who last addressed the House, immediately after his unopposed return in that year, delivered a speech, the greater part of which was devoted to an attack on Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill. I have yet to learn that the opinions which existed in the country on this subject at that time have died out, or that the public are less antagonistic to spending a large sum of money to buy out the Irish landlords. Our point is this: if you compel the Irish landlord to accept £27 10s. for that which is worth £40, you do him a gross injustice. He is entitled to £40 if you purchase from him on an equitable basis. But if, on the other hand, he is only entitled to £27 10s., then he is now getting an undue rental, and many of us are inclined to think that rent reductions in Ireland have not yet reached their lowest level. The Unionist Party have had to do a tremendous wriggle in order to escape from the position which they got into in 1886, for they are now obliged to defend a principle which they opposed strongly in that year. I do not think the hon. Member for Harrow has at all satisfactorily explained the extract from his election address which was published in the *Daily News.* The hon. Member went into the question of the power which we have, as a nation, to borrow money at a very low rate of interest; but I venture to think no nation ought to borrow to the utmost of its power, because in a great emergency it might, if its powers had been largely drawn upon, find the task of getting money very difficult. Now, we contend that there is no demand for this Bill; that the English people do not want it; that the Irish tenants do not require it, and that many of the Irish landlords object to it. The Government have chosen the worst possible time to inflict on the Irish people a Land Purchase Bill. Four years' experience of a drastic Coercion Bill has not made the people, as a whole, more contented than they were previously. As to the suggestion of repudiation, I do not believe that the Irish people are more dishonest than those of any other portion of the British Empire. What the Irish people want is Home Rule, and I venture to think you are making a very great mistake in refusing their demand for it. One thing that has been apparent this evening in the debate, and very apparent in the speech of the hon. Member for Central Birmingham and in the speech of the hon. Member for South Londonderry, is that they, at least, do not consider that this Bill deals with the whole question; that only a segment of it is being dealt with, and that we are really face to face with the project of purchasing out the whole of the Irish landowners. The speech of the hon. Member for Central Birmingham seemed to indicate that the repayments might be re-invested from the purchase of the property of other landlords. That would not meet the difficulty of the situation, because if you rely on the repayment of the £30,000,000 you would have to wait about a century, at least, before you purchase out the whole of the Irish landlords. You cannot wait that century, and I at once approach this question in the belief that we are not discussing £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 of British credit, but that the Bill goes at once to the root of the whole land purchase of Ireland, whatever the sum required may be, whether £100,000,000 or £150,000,000. While I am willing to give you all the credit you claim for the Bill, I say that the moment you advance your £30,000,000 it will be taken up by tenants distributed all over Ireland. Then you will have a class of tenants eventually becoming the owners of the fee simple of their holding, and paying a less sum per annum, as against the tenants who are paying an annual rent-charge which does not place them any nearer the possession of their holdings. Do you mean to tell me you are going to keep a contented Ireland under such circumstances? You will not be able to do so, whatever Party is in power; and there will be a demand on the part of the rest of the tenants of Ireland for the advance of the whole money necessary to purchase out the landowners and enable those who desire it to become possessed of their holdings. That money must be advanced on British credit, and borrowed on British credit, and you must go into the market to get it. Are you sure, with the other demands that are made upon the British Government, that you will always be able to borrow at the same rate of interest? At present there is plenty of floating capital in the country awaiting sound investment, but if you make a greater call you will get less money out of the market for other purposes. But even supposing you could borrow at the same rate of interest, do hon. Members who are going to support this Bill think it is a thing that is to be entered upon lightly, to make the British Government the creditors of the Irish tenants to the extent of £100,000,000, putting it at the very lowest sum? In spite of the protection of the county or district, you are face to face with the poor tenant, who may be on the cheapest holding that can possibly be purchased under this Bill; and if you have to foreclose, what takes place? The British Government has to foreclose on the property and the poor, struggling tenant. There is not money enough to purchase the whole of the land. Will the landlord go to a secure and stable tenant and offer him inducements to purchase his holding? Will he not rather be only too anxious to get rid of those tenants who are in difficulties and in arrears with their rent? The agent might point out to these poor tenants that they could get an immediate reduction of 20 per cent. for the first five years, and at the end of that period there would be 32 per cent. off their rent if they could keep on their holdings. The tenant is not likely to be a man who will look at what will possibly happen 49 years hence. All he sees is that there is a present chance of relieving himself of his responsibility if he can come to terms, and the Commissioners advance the money. The Commissioners would have great difficulty in knowing all the details of the case. It would not be to the interest of the tenant who wants to get his immediate reduction, or of the landlord who wants to sell his land, to place too many details before the Commissioners. The man intends to pay just as he intends to pay his rent. Owing to the conditions of his holding, the poorness of the land, or what not, he has been unable to pay his rent, and by-and-bye he would in the same way be unable to meet the repayments as they became due. That is the class of security you will get if this scheme is adopted. The ingenuity of man could not devise a plan more unjust than to ask the tenants throughout the county to become security for a man who purchases his holding, when they have no voice whatever in saying whether he shall be allowed to purchase or not. The moment the men fail you come down upon these farmers in the county, who have nothing to do with the transaction, and say, "You shall find the money to pay the legitimate debts of these men who have purchased their holdings." What sort of an agitation will you have in Ireland? The Chief Secretary knows what the difficulty of collection was in the tithe agitation, 50 years ago, and he knows how thorough was the failure, because the whole nation of Ireland felt there was no justice in the claim. Do you think you could impress upon the English nation, or any civilised country, the justice of making farmers contribute to the payment of debts which they had no part or lot in incurring, and for which they had in no way given their security? I say that this position in which you are placed shows at once that you are face to face with Home Rule, though you do not like to admit it. You may call it Local Government, or what you please; but until you place in the hands of Irishmen the power to control their own affairs and make them responsible for the purchases in the various districts, you have no right—it would be grossly unjust—to wring a single sixpence out of the pockets of any of these tenants in respect of purchases with which they had nothing to do. I will not labour the point dealt with by my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, with reference to the stopping of the local cess, or the Education Grant. You dare not attempt to carry it out. It may be a very good bogus security to put up here for the purpose of pacifying some weak-minded people who think you have not taken enough security. You know that in these days you could not stop the education of the people, and, in the failure of repayments, you know you would have to come to Parliament for a money grant to meet the difficulty. I know there are many hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House who in their cooler moments will say that this must be the situation. There is one very objectionable power in the Bill which, if you look carefully into it, shows that the security will not be sound. I refer to the provision that two years' arrears of rent may be added to the capital value of the land which is purchased. That is a very objectionable portion of the Bill, and the more we look at it the worse it seems. No doubt it will pass a Second Reading, as I assume the Government have had a majority guaranteed at that stage; but it will have to pass outside this House a criticism more severe than it will receive here, and I have yet to learn how the Government and their supporters will justify themselves in forcing on the Irish people a measure they do not require. With all due respect to the hon. Member for South Londonderry, I confess that I would rather take the opinion of the hon. Member for the City of Cork than his as to what are the views of the majority of the Irish people; and I would suggest that if an opportunity is wanted of judging of those views, it will be afforded at the forthcoming election to fill the vacancy created by the death of Mr. Matthew Harris, when the majority of the constituents will be able to show whether they approve of the action of the Member for the City of Cork or that of the Government in regard to this Bill. If the Government would only consent to a contest in that place we may be able to obtain a vast amount of information that would be useful to all parties concerned. Not only would the electors be able to express an opinion on the action of the Member for the City of Cork, but also on the great mischief which, in their opinion, would be inflicted for years to come by the passing of this measure. The Government would then see how far the Irish people were desirous of rushing into their arms and embracing them for the good work they have done. In conclusion, I shall have great pleasure in voting against this measure, believing it to be uncalled for and based on wrong foundations, inasmuch as it does not contain the conditions which are inserted in the measure of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. That was a scheme for the pacification of Ireland, and formed part of a complete whole intended to meet the requirements of the situation, supposing the country considered that to be the best policy. There is no such position in connection with this Bill. The Government are forcing it on the Irish people, and in addition to their dislike to it it would prove a great misfortune to this country if passed, because it is not, as the Government assert, a mere question of £33,000,000 or £45,000,000, but one as the outcome of which you will ultimately have to deal with the purchase of land throughout the whole of Ireland; because no Government would be able to resist the demands that would be made upon it in respect to land purchase should the result of the present scheme be what its supporters anticipate.

*(11.18) Mr. GEDGE (Stockport): This debate has furnished a somewhat singular and curious spectacle. We have seen Irish and Scotch Radicals and Home Rulers telling us that they and other Radical Members differ on this subject from the views of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I congratulate the hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) on the independence he has displayed, and I only wish that he and other Scotch Members had displayed that independence a little sooner. After the entertainment we have enjoyed from the carefully-prepared impromptus and Scotch *wut* indulged in by the hon. Member, it requires some little boldness for a Southern Member to call the House back to the regions of plain prose. But, at the same time, I think we have sufficient courage on this side of the House to take up the challenge thrown down to us, and state why it is we are able to support this Bill, while in 1886 we opposed in the manner so graphically described by the hon. Member for Edinburgh the Irish Land Bill of the hon. Baronet opposite. I think I can show, without difficulty, how any one may have strongly opposed that measure, and yet very properly and honestly support this. There are great differences, not only as to the occasion and circumstances attending the introduction of the two Bills, but also in regard to their contents. In the first place the Bill of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian was most indissolubly tied by a chain, which honour prevented him from breaking, to the Home Rule Bill. But the right hon. Gentleman seemed to regard his honour as very much like that of Bob Acres, whose courage oozed out at his finger ends, for his honour was easily satisfied by the offer once made to the Irish landlords, although they had never had the opportunity of accepting or rejecting that offer. At any rate the two Bills were bound together, and the result would have followed that after the necessary

money was advanced which was to have been secured on the credit of the British nation, the repayment of that money could only have been obtained under what would have become, by the operation of the Home Rule Bill, practically a foreign law. There was no way in which the money could have been recovered, if the Irish repudiated payments, except by an invasion of that country, and I think we might honestly object to the possibility of having to enforce the repayment of probably £120,000,000 by such means. In the next place, the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman was compulsory, and although the right hon. Gentleman talked of only £50,000,000, it was evident that it must ultimately amount to, at least, £200,000,000, if the scheme were really carried into effective operation. Thirdly, that Bill, involving as it did the credit of the British taxpayer which was thus impossible of enforcement and was compulsory on both tenant and landlord, did not contain the intermediate guarantees for the repayment of the money which the present measure provides. These are the chief differences between the two measures. Now, Sir, the arguments used by hon. Members opposite might well be left to answer each other, because they were mutually destructive. Hon. Members are so driven to find arguments against the Bill that they are obliged to attack it all round in the most absurdly inconsistent manner. We are told at one moment that the Bill offers such poor terms that neither the tenants nor the landlords care to accept it, and the next moment we are told it is so excellent a measure, as far as the tenants are concerned, that they will all rush for it, so that, instead of £33,000,000 or £40,000,000, it would immediately require the provision of a sum that would buy up the whole of the land of Ireland. Again, we were told that the security given to the British taxpayer would be so slight that ultimately the money would have to come out of his pocket; but at the same time we were informed that that security is quite good enough for the landlords, while the right hon. Member for Bridgeton said we ought to deprive the landlord of the other security, and not allow him to come upon the British taxpayer even as a last resort. We were told that the Bill is one of which only the poorer tenants will avail themselves, that the interests of the British taxpayer will be jeopardised, and that he ought to move heaven and earth to reject the Bill. While the hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill told us that it ought to be limited to tenants of less than £50 a year, one of his followers objects to it because only the small tenants will take advantage of it. I confess there would be force in arguments against any scheme by which the State should lend its security to enable tenants to purchase the landlords' interest in the property they occupy, and that if we pass this Bill for the benefit of the Irish tenants, the English agricultural tenants, and even the small shopkeepers, might ask for a measure of a similar character, if, in other respects, the conditions were the same between the parties as they are in Ireland. But this is not so; the position of the Irish tenant is not the same as that of the English tenant, who has a resident landlord, accustomed from time immemorial to do things in connection with the land which he does not do in Ireland. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Bridgeton (Sir G. Trevelyan), has told us that the case of Ireland might be cited as a base on which to found in the United Kingdom a system of tenancy, such as that on which farms are held in some parts of the country, and he also told us that the Ulster custom had legalised the same mode of occupation throughout the whole Island. I differ from the right hon. Baronet. The Ulster custom was extended through Ireland by the Act of 1870, but that custom and that Act did not make it possible to go to the Court to fix the rent payable by the tenant, and to fix that for 15 years, nor was the tenant able to sell his interest without communication with his landlord. But for the Land Act of 1881, I do not believe there would have been any necessity for this measure. What was the effect of the Act of 1881? It had the effect which every one who studied the question knew it must have. Its effect was to render some Bill of this kind absolutely necessary. The disastrous consequences of the Land Act of 1886 have, in the language of a distinguished statesman, been—

> "To generate the very mischief it proposed to eradicate, to throw into confusion all the economical arrangements of the country; to drive out of the field all the solvent and honest

men who might be bidders for the farms; and to carry wide-spread demoralisation throughout the whole mass of the Irish people. That Act has made the landlord an annuitant on the land without interest in its prosperity."

These words are those of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, contained in a prophetic speech. The result has justified his prediction, and I see no way of escape but to buy out the landlords. The hon. Member opposite said that we were coaxing the cat and rubbing it the wrong way at the same time. Well, it seems to me that our first duty is to enforce the law, to deliver the law-abiding subjects of the country from the tyranny of those who have illegally oppressed them, and at the same time to look out for grievances and endeavour to amend them. It certainly is a very thankless task to endeavour to amend grievances in Ireland. Ever since 1869, it has been put forward as the greatest grievance of Ireland that the land was held by a number of absentee Protestant landlords, while the cultivators were Roman Catholics, and the object that was spoken of as most desirable of accomplishment was to get rid of the absentee landlords and put Roman Catholic tenants in their place. Now that an honest endeavour is made to carry out that object we are met with all kinds of criticism. There is scarcely a Member opposite who is not pledged up to the hilt to the principle of a Bill of this kind. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton (Sir G. Trevelyan), for instance, was either a Member or supporter of the Government which brought in the Land Act of 1870. According to that Act two-thirds of the purchase money was to be lent at 5 per cent. for 35 years, on the credit of the British taxpayer. No security whatever was given to the British taxpayer except the remaining one-third. None of the intermediate securities contained in this Bill were given. Then came the Land Act of 1881, under which the Land Commissioners might advance, on the credit of the British taxpayer, three-fourths of the purchase money. No security was given to the taxpayer except the remaining one-fourth. Yet the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton by vote and speech supported that Bill. Then came the Land Purchase Bill of 1886, under which the whole money was to be advanced. This Act did give an intermediate security for the money advanced. It gave a charge on the Customs and Excise to be collected by the Irish Receiver General; but it was a second charge only, the first charge being a tribute of £4,666,000 a year, payable to England. The illusory character of such a security as this is evidence. I admit at once that the right hon. Gentleman did not support that Bill. He was also opposed to the Home Rule Bill of the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), and, being opposed to one of the twins, he was naturally opposed to the other. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian told us that the two Bills were bound together in honour. That being the case, how can Gentlemen opposite, who supported both those Bills, object to the present measure? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton speaks of the possibility of bad times recurring, and of war breaking out. We cannot say there is no possibility of such things even for a period of 15 years. But when I look at the Land Act of 1881, I find that there the rent is absolutely fixed for a term of 15 years, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton was a Member of the Government which introduced that measure. That being so, and that being described by the right hon. Gentleman as a most admirable measure, I reply that it is worse for the Irish tenant to be bound to pay £100 a year for 15 years as rent, despite wars and bad times, than to pay £70 a year for a longer period, as instalments of the price at which the land becomes his own. I do say, however, that, in my humble opinion, 49 years is too long a term, and I hope that further consideration will be given to that point when we reach the Committee stage. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Trevelyan) says there is an absence of any real security for the British taxpayer. How charming it has been to us to-night to see this great anxiety for the British taxpayer on the part of Gentlemen opposite. There was a time when the Irish Members were willing to take all they could get from the British taxpayer as instalments without thanks. Now, in the interest of the British taxpayer, they oppose this Bill. It is noticeable that, when speaking of the securities, they have carefully omitted the important facts of the security. The right hon. Gentleman made no mention whatever of the intermediate securities, which must be exhausted before the Exchequer can be called upon. In the first place there is the land itself and the tenant right, and, in many cases, this will be a sufficient security for the loan. In the next place one-fifth of the purchase money is kept back as further security, and then you have the tenant's insurance money. There is very little chance indeed of the tenant who is willing to pay being driven out of his holding, because he can borrow money on his holding, without difficulty, in order to meet the emergency. As to the hardship pointed out by the hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) of laying hands on the intermediate securities, and, as a result, children going uneducated, and pauper lunatics being thrown upon society, the hon. Member seemed to forget that it is only recently that these grants have been made in aid of the rates which are primarily chargeable for all these purposes. If the Probate Duty and other grants are to be withdrawn to pay up any arrears of the annuities under this Bill, and all these terrible things are to happen in consequence, I would ask how it is they did not happen before these grants were given at all? I should have thought that the only effect of withholding the grants would be to throw Ireland back into the position she occupied a year or two ago, of having to pay for these local purposes unaided by the State. Therefore, I venture to think that all these statements were enormously exaggerated, and that there is no more reality in the pictures which were so cleverly conjured up by the hon. Member than there is in the opposition with which the Bill has been met. As to the remarkable prophecy and moral teaching of the right hon. Member for Bridgeton (Sir G. Trevelyan)—a combination which was usual with the prophets of old, in whose wake the right hon. Gentleman affects to follow. He teaches that there is no moral reason why the Irish purchasers should not repudiate this obligation, and prophesies that they will be advised to do so, because this Act will have been imposed upon their country against the wishes of their Representatives. The old prophets taught that righteousness exalteth a nation: he teaches the repudiation of contracts. The Act of 1881 was imposed on Ireland against the will of her Representatives, and the same hon. Members who now oppose this Bill then opposed that measure. It is not so long since the present leader of the Opposition and the right hon. Baronet were scouring this country for a majority whereby they could govern Ireland without having to consult the 85 Irish Representatives. We are told that an injury is done to Ireland by imposing this Bill on it, but to whom will it do injury? *Volenti non fit injuria*, and I ask what wrong is done to a man by giving him the opportunity of voluntarily putting himself into a position which he has reason to believe will benefit him? No landlord can be made to sell, and no tenant to buy, so that everyone who buys and everyone who sells under this Bill will do so because he wishes it. Landlords and tenants will join together in a bargain, because it suits them both, and does anyone mean to tell me that a tenant, who in 1891 buys because he wishes to buy, and borrows money for the purpose because he wishes to borrow, and agrees to pay the purchase money by an annuity will, eight or 10 years hence, when he has paid a considerable part of the purchase money, repudiate the bargain he has entered into, on the ground that the transaction was immoral, because his representatives voted against the Bill for their own purposes? If anyone holds that view, I, at any rate, do not sympathise with him. The late Government took up this Land Purchase Question because they hoped by its aid to galvanise the Home Rule Scheme into life; and now hon. Gentlemen opposite object to every plan of land purchase because they know that when the tenants have become owners of their holdings they will no longer desire Home Rule. The right hon. Member for Bridgeton knows that land purchase will be fatal to Home Rule, and that is why he declares that the Irish Members will go round the country and tell the people to have nothing to do with this Government measure. He says that, in telling the people that, they will be regarded by the Authorities as making seditious speeches, and will be brought into Court and put into gaol. Well, anything of that kind which occurs will only be by process of law, and after it has been shown that the speeches are seditious. But what happened in 1881 and 1882? The Irish Members told the Irish tenantry to have nothing to do with the Land Act—or, at any rate, until certain test cases had been disposed of; and then, the hon. Member for East Cork and the hon. Member for East Mayo were put into gaol at once, and locked up for months, without being taken before a Court at all, and without any proof having been given that they had uttered seditious speeches. The hollowness of these objections is of a piece with the languor of the opposition, and will not deter me from giving a hearty support to this Bill.

(11.55.) MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to move the Adjournment of the Debate.

*(11.55.) MR. W. H. SMITH: Of course I shall not oppose the Motion, but I must remark upon the extreme langour of the debate this evening. I do not think that the Government would be justified in allowing it to be continued indefinitely, if the same spirit of indifference is to prevail, and I trust that it will be concluded on Thursday.

(11.56.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that this is the principal measure of the Session, and that it must be fully discussed. There has been quite as much langour on the Ministerial side of the House as on the Opposition side.

(11.56.) MR. SEXTON: I would remind the right hon. Gentleman opposite that debates which often begin in a languid manner gain animation and spirit as they advance. To the expectation that the debate will terminate on Thursday I can give no countenance.

(11.57.) DR. TANNER: I wish to point out that Conservative Members have been allowed by their Whips to leave the House this evening in a way that is unprecedented. Expressions which I have heard in the Lobby lead me to believe that hon. Members have been induced by the Conservative Whips to go home, in order to justify the First Lord of the Treasury in making the insulting proposal which we have just heard, and which I certainly did not expect from a gentleman of the right hon. Member's years and experience. I trust that the right hon. Gentleman will, in future, bear in mind a motto which I have seen inscribed on the walls of a certain gaol, "Cease to do evil and strive to do well."

(12.0.) MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I must protest against the attempt to make Party capital——

It being midnight, the Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate lapsed without Question put; and the Debate on the Amendment to the Second Reading stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday.

SUCK DRAINAGE (PROVISION OF FUNDS.)

Order for Committee read.

(In the Committee.)

(12.3.) DR. TANNER: This is a matter concerning which a great deal has been said from time to time, and for many years hon. Members have tried to enforce on the attention of Her Majesty's Government the claims of the district of Ballinasloe for the execution of drainage works. I now want to know what is going to be done, and to what extent the funds asked for will be applied for the real benefit of the neighbourhood? I sincerely hope that this money will not be thrown away in the manner in which we are accustomed to see large sums of money, voted by the House, squandered. I must expostulate with the Government trying, night after night, when the hour of 12 approaches, to pass these large sums of money without giving us any explanation of what they are going to do. It is positively insulting to the Members who come from Ireland that they should be required to agree to these Votes without one word of explanation.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): This is really what I may call a stage which is necessary before the Bill can be introduced, and I hope the hon. Member and the Committee will be satisfied to allow this stage to pass, and the Bill to be introduced, so that the House may see what the Bill contains. The history of the matter is within the recollection of hon. Members. Last year a private Bill, which provided for an extension of the time for the completion of the drainage of the River Suck, was introduced. There has been a large expenditure already sanctioned, and that money cannot be appropriated on the land under the Act of last year unless and until the works are completed, and the works cannot be completed unless some aid is given in the shape of a grant. The Government came to the conclusion that a case had been made out for giving a grant, and the Bill proposes to make a grant of £50,000, to be expended by the Local Authority fixed under the Bill of last year. The interests of the tenants and of the district are fully protected, and, therefore, I hope this preliminary stage will be assented to.

DR. TANNER: I had not an opportunity of being present last year because the Chief Secretary for Ireland locked me up. I think it is only right that a Member who differs from Her Majesty's Government on nearly every measure they introduce should endeavour to extract from the Government, even at an hour when they are getting tired. [The CHAIRMAN (Sir J. Gorst): Order, order!] As a Member of Her Majesty's Government, Sir John Gorst, I bow to your superior judgment. I consider the Government are hardly treating us with decency, and I must object to the grant being passed at this time of night.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member object?

DR. TANNER: Certainly.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

BARRACKS (CONSOLIDATED FUND)

Order for Adjourned Debate on Report of Resolution [27th February] read.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): This is merely a formal stage, and it was postponed till to-night, in order that the House should have an opportunity of hearing from the Chancellor of the Exchequer how it is proposed to raise the money. Now that that statement has been made I hope the House will——

DR. TANNER: I object.

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I think the hon. Member will be courteous enough to allow me to make my statement. The right hon. Member for Wolverhampton desired to raise a question of considerable importance, but I asked him whether he would not consent to raise it at a later stage — when the Bill is in possession of the House—and he consented to do so. The Bill is brought forward on the ground of the unsanitary condition of our barracks. I, therefore, think it will be allowed to pass without further delay.

DR. TANNER: I regret I cannot accede to the right hon. Gentleman's wishes. I want to hear a little more as to what the right hon. Gentleman is going to do with the money.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES BILL.
(No. 201.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

DR. TANNER: I object.

*SIR E. BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): I appeal to the hon. Member to allow this Bill to be read a second time. I feel confident he has not read the Bill, or he would not object. Let me draw his attention to the Memorandum attached to the Bill. It points out that the Bill is to secure sufficient bedroom accommodation, proper drainage, and ventilation, in all new cottages for the labouring classes, and to enable Rural Sanitary Authorities to take care that such cottages have adequate gardens.

DR. TANNER: The hon. Baronet will excuse my explaining that there are several Members on this side of the House who are not here, but who may have some objection to the Bill. If the hon. Baronet can assure me that the Bill has the approval of those Members, I will not continue my objection.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE BILL [LORDS].

Bill read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. (Bill 230.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 22nd April, 1890.

PRESENTATION TO BENEFICES BILL.
(No. 13.)

Reported from the Standing Committee for General Bills, with Amendments; and re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday next; and to be printed as amended. (No. 58.)

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL BILL.
(No. 12.)

Reported from the Standing Committee for General Bills, without Amendment; and re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday next.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 59.)

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 22nd April, 1890.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition;

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT SECURITIES.

Return ordered—

"Of the Amounts of British Government Securities held by the several Government Departments and other Public Offices on the 31st day of March, 1890, specifying whether held in England or Ireland (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 312, of Session 1889)"—

Other Securities.				Local Loans £3 per Cent. Stock.	£2½ per Cents.	£2¾ per Cent. (1905).	£2¾ per Cent. Consols (including Certificates).	£3½ per Cents.
Annuities for terms of years.		Exchequer Bills, Bonds, Treasury, &c., Bills.	£3 per Cent. Book Debt.					
Other Annuities.	Red Sea and India Telegraph Annuities.							

—*Mr. Jackson.*

QUESTIONS.

IRELAND—ANCIENT MONUMENTS.

Mr. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that there are many ancient monuments in Ireland which it is desirable to protect, for which existing Acts of Parliament are insufficient; is he aware that a portion of the Abbey of Kells, County Kilkenny, is being utilised for building walls elsewhere; that the ruins at Kilmallock, one of the finest in Ireland, urgently need protection; that the great tumulus at Rathmore, County Kildare, is being carted away to repair the neighbouring roads; and that there are numerous other instances in which, if immediate steps be not taken, ancient Irish monuments of great interest will be seriously injured, and possibly destroyed; and whether, in view of the fact that the present machinery, under the Irish Church Act of 1869, and the Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882, is defective, there is any intention of legislating with a view to giving wider and efficient protection to the ancient monuments of Ireland?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer the questions. Representations have been made to the Government as to the condition of some of the ancient monuments—the Abbey of Kells, the ruins at Kilmallock, and the great tumulus at Rathmore—referred to by the hon. Member. The Treasury and the Irish Government have now the subject under consideration. I understand that there is power to take over any additional ancient monuments with the consent of the owners of them.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): May I ask that, in addition to the particular places to which the attention of the hon. Gentleman has been drawn, some attention will also be paid to the interesting castle and cathedral remains at Athenry?

MR. JACKSON: Certainly, if it comes within our power.

MR. JOHN MACKEY.

MR. WEBB: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to proceedings at Ramelton Petty Sessions on 29th March, as reported in the *Londonderry Sentinel* of 1st April, where Mr. John Mackey, Sessional Crown Solicitor for Donegal, acknowledged to having attacked with a sword Mr. Hugh Hegarty for having by accident broken a pane of glass and having refused to accompany him to the

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police office; and whether he will inquire into all the circumstances of the case?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am informed that the matter referred to in this question is the subject-matter of legal proceedings still pending. The Irish Government will await the result of these proceedings.

MR. WEBB: Is it not the case that Mr. Mackey was charged with having stabbed this man twice?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I understand—but I do not speak with confidence in the matter—Mr. Mackey is not charged with stabbing. What he is accused of is that having a sword in his hand he assaulted the man whom he accused of having maliciously broken a pane of glass in his house.

PROSECUTION FOR DISPLAYING A FLAG.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to a prosecution brought by a policeman named Balls, stationed at Fermoy, against Mrs. Foley, a respectable publican of Watergrasshill, for displaying a flag with the inscription "Cead Mille Failthe" from her house and place of sale; whether he is aware that it was sworn by another policeman that the flag was no obstruction, and that both the magistrates, after declaring that they were not acquainted with the law under which the prosecution was brought, and had never heard of any similar prosecution dismissed the case; by whom is the cost of this prosecution borne; and whether any remonstrance will be addressed to the policeman in question?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that proceedings were instituted against the publican mentioned for persisting in a breach of the Licensing Laws after warning. The statements in the second paragraph of the question are true; but with this important addition, that an offence had been proved under the law; but that, as the defendant did not seem to be acquainted with the law in the matter, they dismissed the case with a caution. There were no costs incurred by the prosecution beyond the ordinary

1s. stamp on the summons. The local police were acting in the discharge of their duty.

Dr. TANNER: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly answer the second part of the question, whether the magistrates did not state that they were utterly unacquainted with the law under which the prosecution was brought, and having never heard of any similar prosecution, they dismissed the case?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have said that the facts are as they are stated in the second paragraph of the question.

Dr. TANNER: Am I to understand that this is the first case in which this man Balls has offended in a similar manner?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman must not understand that the officer referred to exceeded his duty.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to give notice that upon the Estimates I will again bring the matter under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman.

DR. AMBROSE.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Irish Local Government Board intend taking notice of negligent inattention of Dr. Ambrose, of Newcastle, West, who on Thursday, the 10th ultimo, neglected to attend, on visiting ticket, until 7 p.m., although an urgent summons was given him at 9 a.m. on that date, the poor patient dying in the interim; and whether Dr. Ambrose is, or has been, obliged to reside in his dispensary district?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No complaint appears to have been made either to the local Board of Guardians or to the Dispensary Committee, alleging neglect on the part of Dr. Ambrose on the occasion referred to. The hours mentioned in the question are not consistent with the statement which has been made by the doctor to the Honorary Secretary of the Dispensary Committee, his statement being that he received a visiting ticket at 2 p.m., and was at the patient's house—a distance of five miles—about half-past 3 p.m. As regards the second part of the question, no change has taken place since the hon. Member who puts this question asked a similar one in regard to residence on 13th December, 1888, when it appeared that the situation of the doctor's residence was convenient for doing the work of the district.

Dr. TANNER: Has the Local Government Board Inspector taken steps, for the benefit of the poor people who come under the ministration of Dr. Ambrose, to ascertain whether the allegations which have been made are justified, and, if not, will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to inquire into the matter?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that there was no negligence.

Dr. TANNER: From whom has the right hon. Gentleman received his information?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No complaint appears to have been made either to the Board of Guardians or to the Dispensary Committee, and when such a complaint is made it will be time to consider it.

Dr. TANNER: If I give the right hon. Gentleman chapter and verse to show that the patient died in consequence of not being visited by the doctor, will the right hon. Gentleman condescend to give me a proper answer?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Any communication that may be made by the hon. Gentleman will receive attention.

CUSTOMS—MR. JAMES M'ALISTER.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin, Co., S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether Mr. James M'Alister, Supernumerary Principal Clerk of the Customs in Dublin, is about to be superannuated against his wish, though in good health and only in the 61st year of his age; and whether, in the event of his retirement taking place, it will be a breach of the engagement made by a previous Secretary to the Treasury?

*Mr. JACKSON: Mr. James M'Alister, who held the office of principal clerk at the Port of Dublin, and who is now in the 61st year of his age, has, on the recommendation of the Commissioners of Customs, lately been put on the Superannuation List, after a service of 42 years, at the highest retiring allowance to which he could become entitled. Mr. M'Alister did express to the Board of Customs his desire to be retained in the Service a little longer; but as the place which he vacates is no longer required, and has, in fact, been for some time redundant of the proper establishment, the Board of Customs did not think that he had any case for appeal. There will not be in the case of Mr. M'Alister any breach of an engagement made with regard to him by a previous Secretary to the Treasury.

SILVER MARKING.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to Parliamentary Paper No. 59, "Foreign Countries (Gold and Silver Marking)"; whether, considering that every article of silver plate manufactured in the United Kingdom for home sale or for exportation must be of British standard ·925, and must be hall marked; that the standards of all continental countries differ from ours, and for the most part from each other, and that most of them have marking systems of their own based upon their own standards, those standards are for the most part inferior to that of the United Kingdom; and that, in the case of foreign countries, although there are strict laws with reference to their home trade, manufacturers are permitted to make plate of any quality for exportation, British manufacturers can have similar commercial facilities extended to them?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Theoretically I have no objection whatever to British manufacturers marking plate of any quality for exportation. I understand, however, that the great majority of the tradesmen are in favour of compulsory hall marking, and I do not know how the two can be combined. It is a matter for discussion, and it shall receive due consideration.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware, in reference to the Indian trade, that the manufacture is from rupee silver ·916, and that this is slightly reduced in working?

MR. GOSCHEN: I did not understand that the question referred to the Indian trade. I understood that the hon. Gentleman's question referred to the exportation of manufactured plate, and not to the importation of Indian silver manufactured articles. We do intend to arrange that Indian silver manufactured articles shall be imported with a special mark at the rupee standard, or with a special mark corresponding to it. That is the concession which we hope to make and in regard to which we are in communication with the Secretary of State for India.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): Will the Goldsmiths' Company not interfere with the arrival of Indian silver plate?

MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member must understand that I have given a full answer in regard to our intentions.

KNOCKANORE POST OFFICE.

MR. WEBB: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the amount of business transacted at the Post Office of Knockanore, dependent on Tallow, County of Waterford, is not such as to render desirable arrangements being there made for a Sunday delivery of letters?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. MAXWELL, Wigtonshire): In the absence of my right hon. Friend I am authorised by him to say that he will be happy consider the question if, in conformity with the usual practice, a Memorial in favour of further accomodation is presented.

THE POLICE RATE.

MR. JAMES ELLIS (Leicestershire, Bosworth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board whether the power of levying the police rate rests with the County Council or the Standing Joint Committee?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): The power rests with the County Council and not with the Standing Joint Committee.

STRANGEWAYS PRISON, MANCHESTER.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the inquiry recently conducted by Captain Wilson in Strangeways Prison, Manchester, included charges against the chaplain; and, if so, what was the result of such inquiry?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): A complaint was made to a member of the Visiting Committee that the chaplain did not attend sufficiently to the prisoners in hospital.

The Visiting Committee reported this to the Commissioners, and Captain Wilson accordingly investigated the matter, and, with the concurrence of a member of the Visiting Committee who assisted him in the inquiry, reported that the chaplain had performed his duties in the prison in a satisfactory manner, and that the information given to the contrary effect was unreliable.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: May I further ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, towards the end of last year, a prisoner, who had been sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment at Lincoln Assizes, was transferred, after he had completed six months of his sentence, from Lincoln to Strangeways Prison, Manchester, and after he had been there a few weeks was flogged, and shortly afterwards was sent back to Lincoln; and, if so, why was the transfer made, and for what reason was the prisoner flogged?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Prison Commissioners that this prisoner was sentenced on July 2, 1889, to 12 months' imprisonment. He was believed to be feigning insanity, and was placed in association and watched. After a time the Governor reported that the facilities at his disposal for placing prisoners in association were too limited to allow of the constant supervision of this man. He was accordingly removed to Strangeways, the nearest prison where accommodation in association was available. While at that prison on one occasion he was exceedingly violent, and his misconduct was reported to the Visiting Committee, who, after taking evidence and hearing, as usual, the opinion of the medical officer, sentenced him to be flogged. He has since behaved well, and some time after, on his asking that he might be sent back to Lincoln, where he could more easily see his friends, his wishes were complied with.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Am I to understand that the prisoner was under observation for insanity?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The plea was insanity, and the prisoner was placed under observation on that account.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Was this man forwarded to Strangeways Prison in order that he might be under observation there, being suspected of being insane?

Mr. MATTHEWS: He was not suspected of being insane, but insanity was pleaded on his behalf, and, therefore, he was kept under observation.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Was there not a case in which a prisoner last year was flogged and died after being flogged who was suspected of insanity?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The hon. Gentleman must give notice of the question.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the matter again.

THE BUDGET SCHEME.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amount of duty levied per gallon of proof spirit contained in beer and in spirits respectively; the amount per gallon of proof spirits contained in beer, represented by the three pence per barrel which it is proposed under his Budget Scheme to allocate to local purposes; and the amount of Spirit and of Beer Duty paid during the last financial year by England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question until Thursday. I have had so many matters to attend to, and only having received notice of the question this morning I have been unable to make inquiry.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer the number of gallons of home made spirits on which duty has been paid "retailed for consumption as beverages" in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively for the past financial year; whether he is aware that Scotland consumes close on three times as much home spirits as England in proportion to the population; whether the duty on home spirits is more than double the duty on other alcoholic beverages; and whether of the £1,304,000 to be set aside as grants in aid of local taxation the larger amount per head per population will be payable by Scotland?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I can only make the same reply to the hon. Member as that which I have given to the hon. Member for the College Division (Dr. Cameron).

THE TEA DUTY.

MR. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in view of the losses which the retail dealers in tea would suffer if the reduction in the duty from 6d. to 4d. were to take effect from the 1st proximo, he will consider whether the date at which the reduced duty only will be levied can be postponed until 1st June, and thus allow the retail dealers an opportunity, such as was given to them when the duty was previously reduced, of getting rid of their existing stocks.

*MR. GOSCHEN: This is a matter of very considerable importance, and I have been engaged in endeavouring to ascertain what, on the whole, would be the most convenient course in the circumstances. While, on the one hand, I have received a number of communications urging that the reduction should be postponed in order to enable the dealers to decrease their stocks, I am informed on the other hand that postponement would cause considerable confusion in the trade. I shall make inquiry, in order to find what will be the most convenient course. With regard to precedents, it is true that on the last occasion additional time was given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian. But there were special circumstances then, and on former occasions the reduction came into operation at once. But I will make inquiry and answer the question on Thursday.

BECHUANALAND.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies how much of the additional Estimate of £30,000 for Bechuanaland is to go to police charges, and how much to land survey; whether the lands to be surveyed are exclusively within the Crown Colony; whether the extra police are to be used solely in the Protectorate; and who are the Native Chiefs whose unfriendly attitude has caused this increase in the force; where is their territory situated; and what action is it intended to take against them?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): £25,000 of the additional Estimate is for police and £5,000 for surveys. The answer to the second and third paragraphs of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative. It is not desirable to name publicly any chiefs whose attitude is at the present time unfriendly, as it may be hoped that if patiently dealt with they will before long appreciate the protection afforded to them. Their territories are in all cases within the British Protectorate, and it is not intended to take any action against them, but only to prevent any possible interference with telegraph construction or the passage of traders and others through the Protectorate. With regard to the supplementary question put by the hon. Member, the first paragraph of the letter referred to shows that the offer was made by the British South Africa Company; and the second paragraph shows why it was declined, namely, because it was not desirable that the Bechuanaland police should operate beyond the Protectorate.

WHITEHILL PUBLIC SCHOOL, GLASGOW.

MR. CALDWELL: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Scotch Education Department are aware that Blackfriars Hall, Dennistoun, Glasgow, has been sanctioned as a free school and known as Whitehill Public School (No. 2 Temporary); whether it is a condition of admission to that school that a schedule of particulars be filled up and that the authority of the Glasgow School Board be received; whether he is aware that children, who applied for admission on Monday last week, have not yet been admitted, owing to the alleged want of sanction of the Glasgow School Board; and whether such restrictions on admission to free schools are in accordance with the Code or with law?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The Blackfriars Hall has been sanctioned as a temporary school under the name of the Whitehill Public School, No. 2. It is presumed that the school is to be one to which the relief of fees is to apply, but the School Board have been asked to submit regulations for this relief in terms of the Code. The Education Department know nothing of any such condition of admission to the school as is referred to in the hon. Member's question; and until I have further information on the point, I am unable to say whether the condition imposed is, or is not, in accordance with the Code or with law.

HALF HOLIDAY TO WRITERS IN PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the recently issued Treasury Minute giving a half-holiday to writers in public Departments has been so far nullified by the power given to Departmental authorities to refuse the boon in cases where business was pressing; and whether the Treasury would be willing to give directions that in such a case a half-holiday in lieu of the one lost should be given as soon as the pressure was over?

Mr. JACKSON: The Civil Service Commissioners have issued a notice that copyists may, provided the Heads of Departments in which such copyists are employed are satisfied that the state of public business will permit, be allowed a half-holiday without loss of pay on alternate Saturdays. It is the essence of the concession that the state of public business permits the absence of copyists in hours for which they receive pay, and the Treasury cannot undertake to extend the privilege in a manner which would in effect lead to duplicate payment for the work.

PLATE DUTIES.

Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the whole of the trade engaged in the manufacture of gold plate has been at a standstill since he made his Budget Statement; and whether he will consider the claim of the manufacturers to a rebate on the stocks in hand?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I have received representations that the trade in gold plate has been thrown into some confusion by the proposed abolition of the duties on plate. Some inconvenience is, however, inevitable when an abolition or reduction of duty takes place as regards the articles affected. My attention has been exclusively drawn in respect of the difficulties in which manufacturers or others are placed as regards their duty-paid stocks to the case of wedding rings. As wedding rings have been for years specially exempted from a drawback on exportation, no question of rebate can arise in their case. But it may be worth considering whether an extension of the date for the duty on gold plate to come into operation would not convenience holders of duty-paid stocks.

THE EDUCATION CODE BILL.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education on what day the Education Code (1890) Bill will be printed and distributed?

*The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir W. Hart Dyke, Kent, Dartford): The Bill will be delivered to hon. Members to-morrow. It is down for Second Reading on the 28th *pro formâ*, but will not be proceeded with until a general discussion has taken place upon the Code.

PROHIBITION OF MEETINGS OF POST OFFICE OFFICIALS.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I had intended to ask the Postmaster General whether he has prohibited meetings of telegraphists, sorters, and postmen outside the Post Office building for the discussion of official questions except under certain conditions; and whether one of these conditions is that "an official shorthand writer be present, if required by the authorities"? At the request of the right hon. Gentleman I beg to postpone the question until Thursday.

THE LICENSING BILL.

Mr. BONSOR (Surrey, Wimbledon): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the provisions of the Licensing Bill will be made known before the Second Reading of the Inland Revenue (Budget) Bill?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): It is not in my power to give a definite assurance that the Licensing Bill will be produced before the Second Reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue (Budget) Bill; but I will take care that the general provisions of the Licensing Bill be made known before the Second Reading of the Budget Bill.

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): Will the Bill apply to Ireland?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The provisions which are intended to authorise the raising of money can easily be extended to Ireland.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Are there to be two Bills—a suspensory Bill, and another Bill?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: There will be two Bills. There will be a Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, and a Bill dealing with the question of licences under the conditions explained by my right hon Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. BAUMANN: Arising out of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, may I ask if it is still his intention to give to the hon. Member for South Derry (Mr. Lea) any special and exceptional opportunity for reversing the decision of the House on the 26th of March?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! That is a question of which notice must be given.

Mr. BAUMANN: Then I will ask the right hon. Gentleman the question of which I have given private notice.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: There is a Motion on the Paper which is intended to give the House an opportunity of re-considering the Intoxicating Liquors (Ireland) Bill to-morrow; and I stated, in answer to a question put to me by the hon. Gentleman opposite, that I thought the House ought to have that opportunity, seeing that the effect of the Resolution moved with respect to the previous Bill was certainly not foreseen by the House at large, and the House, in fact, was taken by surprise. I am myself, therefore, of opinion that that Resolution does not bind the House; but it is not for me to interpret the Rules and Orders of the House; that is to be done by higher authority. If it is felt that that Resolution ties the hands of the House it would be desirable that by a Resolution of the hon. Member for South Derry or myself the House should be at liberty to consider the question, especially as the Bill would be nothing more than a continuance Bill with amendments.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): May I ask whether, when the Resolution was put from the Chair, a division was not distinctly challenged by the right hon. Member for the Isle of Thanet (Mr. J. Lowther)? I certainly cannot see how the House can be said to have been taken by surprise.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I wish to know whether the Resolution will affect the Budget so far as it applies to Ireland?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I would rather not enter into a discussion of the question. The point can only be properly dealt with in debate. My opinion is not in the slightest changed by the remark of my right hon. Friend the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck). I am convinced that if the House had realised the importance of the subject there would have been a Division.

Mr. BAUMANN: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me plainly whether, if the Motion of the hon. Member for South Derry is not reached this evening, the Government intend to put down a notice on the Paper to-morrow morning?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: As at present advised, certainly the Government will do so.

THE BUDGET RESOLUTIONS.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): May I ask the Secretary to the Treasury why the Budget Resolutions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to move in Committee of Ways and Means do not appear on the Paper?

*Mr. JACKSON: The responsibility rests with me. I understood that it had not been the practice to put the Resolutions on the Paper, but I find that that was done last year. My attention, however, was not drawn to that fact, and I followed what has been the general practice.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Tea.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That, in lieu of the Duty of Customs now chargeable upon Tea, there shall be charged and paid, on and after the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, the Duty following, and such Duty shall continue to be charged and paid upon Tea imported into Great Britain and Ireland until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one (that is to say):
>
> Tea . . . the pound . Four Pence."

*(2.49.) MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh S.): A conversation occurred a few minutes ago in reference to the desirability of placing these Resolutions upon the Paper. The Secretary to the Treasury very handsomely took upon himself the responsibility of not having put them down to-day, but I trust that he will go further, and promise that the omission will be repaired in future.

MR. JACKSON: I think that the general feeling of the House is in favour of that course, and I will see that, as far as I am concerned, it is adopted in future.

(2.50.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): While I am sure that we all of us rejoice that the Tea Duty is to be reduced, I trust that, at the same time, I may be permitted to express my regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has frittered away an opportunity of conferring a very great blessing upon the people of this country. We are often told that half a loaf is better than no bread, but the proverb scarcely applies to a third of a loaf. The taking away of a third of the duty will, of course, confer benefit upon some people, but not exactly upon the people whom the right hon. Gentleman himself desires to benefit. The Committee will remember the fervid eloquence with which the right hon. Gentleman urged and insisted upon the buyers of tea standing out for their rights. He was evidently afraid that they would not get the benefit of the reduction of 2d. Indeed, the language which the right hon. Gentleman used on the subject, if it had been used in Ireland upon a matter of popular interest, would most probably have subjected him to the attention of the police. He said that all buyers of tea should consider whether, by better organisation—which I take to mean combination—or by other means—which I take to mean the boycotting of refractory shopkeepers—they cannot secure to themselves the benefit of this reduction. I know that, at the present time, there is a very keen competition in the wholesale tea business, and, doubtless, enterprising merchants and middlemen will see it to their interest to give to those who buy from them the full benefit of the reduction of the duty. But how far this applies to the shopkeeper, and those especially who sell to the poor, is altogether another question. In suggesting this doubt, I do not wish to insinuate anything against the shopkeepers; I am quite sure that they desire that the poor should have the benefit of the reduction of duty; but I question their capability of conferring it upon them. With regard to those who buy tea by the pound, or in larger quantities, it is easy to imagine how they will get the full benefit of the reduction of duty; but in regard to those who buy tea by the ounce, and they comprise hundreds of thousands of the population—probably millions—it is difficult to see how they can get any benefit from it at all. A reduction of 2d. per lb. amounts to half a farthing per ounce. I do not recollect having seen a half-farthing lately, and I do not think half-farthings are actually coined. Therefore, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to take off half a farthing per ounce, and consequently in regard to the enormous majority of the consumers of tea the reduction of 2d. will practically confer on them no benefit whatever. But there is another matter. This half-hearted measure for the reduction of the Tea Duties does not at all affect the evil principle of a tax which is essentially and necessarily an unjust tax, by reason of the disproportionate and unequal way in which it bears upon the rich and the poor. It still bears an enormous and an extraordinary disproportion to the value of the commodity. It amounts to at least 50 per cent. upon the average cost price of the tea before the duty is paid. I see from the Returns of one of the largest tea brokers, that of late the average price has been 8d. per lb., although some teas have fetched 9d. A duty of 4d. per lb. is 50 per cent. upon the price of the article—an enormous duty upon an article of necessary consumption. The right hon. Gentleman himself treated it as an article of necessary consumption, because, in urging upon the consumers the desirability of combining in order to obtain the benefit of the duty, he styled it an article of primary necessity. Yet, upon an article of necessity to the very poor, he is content to go on imposing a duty of 50 per cent. Further than that, it is an imposition which falls unequally upon the rich and the poor. The poor buy the cheapest tea they can get—fourpenny tea—and upon that the duty is exactly 100 per cent. What the right hon. Gentleman has endeavoured to make for the dwellers in houses between £20 and £60 a year rent is essentially a middle-class concession—a concession to men of moderate wealth, with incomes ranging from £300 to £500 and £1,000 a year. From sundry passages in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman I had hoped that something very much better might be expected from him. It will be recollected with what earnestness and manifest depth of feeling he dwelt upon the disgraceful fact that at every fresh wave of prosperity the population of this country rush to the beer barrel, the spirit tap, or the wine bottle, in order to attest that prosperity, while he knew that, at the same time, he had to acknowledge a diminution of the amount brought in by the Tea Duty. Some of us formed an inference, from the right hon. Gentleman's remarks, that he was about to propose a great shifting of the financial burdens, from those articles which are a necessity to a sober and decent life, to articles of luxury, such as intoxicating drinks. And he could have done so. He could have made an immense revolutionary change in the incidence of the burdens of the people, for he had a surplus of £3,459,000, to which he has rightly added an additional duty of 6d. upon spirits, which he expects to yield £500,000, and if he retains, for Imperial purposes, the extra duty upon beer of £350,000, he would have a surplus of nearly £4,500,000, which would have been sufficient to give us a free breakfast table. That would have been a bold stroke of finance, and would have been extremely popular to all sections of the people, while the right hon. Gentleman would have conferred a special benefit upon the most needy and the greatest number. Instead of that, the right hon. Gentleman has frittered away his surplus by dividing it among burdens the relief of which will be very little felt indeed. Take the House Duty; a man living in a £60 house will have to pay less by 15s. a year. What gratitude can the right hon. Gentleman expect for relief on that account? People do not scrutinise so very minutely the rate bills which come in from time to time. The cause of annoyance is that any rate bills come in at all, but a difference of 15s. between one year and another will not excite a fervid burst of gratitude in the breast of a man who is living in a £60 house, whereas, if every man's tea had been put into his house free of any duty whatever, all would feel the benefit. In his Budget Speech last year, the right hon. Gentleman used these remarkable words: "I admit that the Tea Duty is a Poll Tax on a very low scale." We all admit that of all taxes a Poll Tax is the most unjust. It takes no notice of a man's means, but presses with iron uniformity upon all alike. This tax presses more heavily upon the tea of the very poor than it does upon the tea drunk by the rich, and therefore, it is even worse than a Poll Tax. I do not believe that any one who takes a sound view of what is good for the prosperity of the country can ever support the plundering of the poor by a heavy tax, like this, upon what the right hon. Gentleman himself treats as an article of primary necessity to life. Then, again, let me consider another aspect of the matter. The right hon. Gentleman just now, in answering a question put to him from this side of the House, referred to the amount of confusion wrought in business transactions by the uncertainty of the amount of duty paid.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Temporary uncertainty.

MR. PICTON: But the right hon. Gentleman in his speech also told us that one reason of the diminution of Revenue from this source was that for some time past people have been speculating on the reduction or abolition of the duty, and, therefore, that there has been much less doing in the tea market. Will not the same thing occur again this year? In no case can we suppose that a duty of 4d. can hold on very long, and this is one of the evils of Customs Duties imposed on articles of this kind. They always have an unsettling effect upon the market at particular seasons of the year, and when once it is felt, as it is now, that the duty is doomed, the uncertainty will increase and be felt painfully every year when we approach Budget day. I think the right hon. Gentleman would have been doing a better thing for the trade if, once for all, he had settled the question by sweeping the duty away altogether. He has not done quite justice to the great

Empire of India in the manner in which he has dealt with this question. I, for one, would be the very last to suggest that a protective difference should be made in charging the tea which comes from India less than the tea which comes from China. I object to all such differential duties, on principle, but, looking at the very rapid and conspicuous growth of the tea trade from India, surely the right hon. Gentleman ought to recognise that it is most important to encourage, as far as possible, this source of prosperity to our great Dependency. I do not think that it is treating India as an integral part of the Empire to charge duties on goods—especially goods of this character—that are sent to us from its shores. I hope that this point will be fully considered in regard to future Budgets. One word more in regard to the time for making this change. We all credit the right hon. Gentleman with a sincere anxiety to cause as little trouble as possible to the markets. I have been strongly urged by my constituents interested in the question to secure from him, if it is at all possible, some little delay in making the change. I trust that he will carefully weigh all the addresses which will be made to him from different parts of the country, and that he will do his best to satisfy the wishes of those who have a substantial interest in the matter. I hope that what he will hear as to the trouble occasioned by these constant changes will convince him, in future, that it is his first duty to make use of what surplus may be assured to him to sweep away, once and for ever, a burden upon an article of primary necessity.

*(3.10.) MR. GOSCHEN: It would scarcely be thought that the duty which has been denounced by the hon. Member who has just sat down is one which has existed for 25 years at the amount of 6d., and that no serious attempt has been made during those years to diminish the duty. I have the good fortune to be the first Chancellor of the Exchequer who has been able to deal with this question by reducing the duty by 33 per cent., and I ought not, therefore, to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer who should be singled out by the hon. Member for maintaining part of the duty, while no attempt at the reduction or abolition of the duty has been made during the reign of previous Chancellors of the Exchequer. The hon. Member wishes to persuade me that the duty ought to be swept away altogether, and charges me with having called it a Poll Tax, for the retention of which there is no justification. When I called it a Poll Tax, I meant that it was a Poll Tax in the sense that it was borne by nearly every member of the community. This small tax is the only one of the Imperial taxes which rests upon the greater portion of the community, and if it were repealed a great number of persons would contribute not one single shilling to the Revenue. It has always been held that representation and taxation ought to go together. But, if so, the reverse is true also, namely, that taxation and representation should be combined, and that every person who exercises the franchise should contribute in some degree to the Revenue. I do not know whether hon. Members think that portion of the working classes who do not smoke and do not drink should contribute nothing to the Revenue. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!" *from the Irish Members.*] If that is the view of hon. Members I am sure it is not the view of the working classes of this country. On the contrary, I believe it to be the general opinion that some small portion of every man's earnings should be contributed to the maintenance of the country. I would defend that principle before any working class audience. A very large question is opened up, but I wish to protest against the view that this tax ought to be entirely swept away, because it is a tax which rests, to a certain extent, on the working classes, and upon those who are in straitened circumstances. The hon. Member rather complained that the consumer will not gain by the 2d., but really his argument would almost go to the point that the consumer would gain very little indeed, even though the duty were taken off altogether.

MR. PICTON: My argument is that we have no coin which represents half a farthing.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member made a mistake of supreme importance in this connection. Tea is not always sold by weight at all, but by the packet. In Whitechapel an enormous quantity of tea is sold in ha'porths. The customer asks for a ha'porth and gets a certain amount of tea for the halfpenny. If the tea costs so much less the customer ought to get so much more in quantity for his halfpenny. I do not say that that will be so. It rests entirely with the good faith of dealers whether they get honest quantity and quality. I think the argument that the remission of 2d. will not benefit the consumer may be pushed a great deal too far, because, if it were well founded, it would almost go to show that you could never make reductions in articles of consumption. Wherever a reduction is made in the duty upon an article of general consumption, it should certainly go to the benefit of the consumers, and consequently they ought to feel the full benefit of this reduction of 2d. I believe that, where competition is good and effective, the consumers will get the benefit, and I have heard already, from many parts of the country, that grocers have advertised that the price of tea of the same quality has even now been reduced by 2d. per lb. In a vast number of places, the 2d. will distinctly go to the working classes and to the purchasers of tea; and where tea is sold not by weight, but by packet, it is possible to give the working classes immediately and easily the full benefit, and I hope it will be done. Now, I owe an apology to a portion of the tea trade, who think themselves aggrieved by certain words which I used the other day. I said that tea could be bought at 11d. and 1s., and that it was sold in certain villages at 2s., and even 3s. I have received vast numbers of communications from grocers and others on the subject, and I have to express my regret if I have, even unintentionally, in any way exaggerated the situation. But there is a large quantity of tea that is dealt with in this way; it is bought at 6d. or 7d., being separated into two qualities, of which the inferior would only cost 5d. or 6d., at most. That tea is sold somewhere. Is it sold to the better classes who are paying 1s. 6d. for their tea? While I express my regret to those to whom it is due, I am bound to say that I had in my mind dealers in distant villages, where there is no sufficient competition, and I know, as a fact, that in many such villages tea of no good quality, which ought not to cost more than 11d. originally, is sold at 3s. per lb. The Committee will forgive me if I dwell upon this matter for a moment. I think the tea dealers have a right to ask for an explanation on my part, and the Committee also have a right to an explanation how the working classes are to get the benefit of the 2d. This is no new question, but for years past I have thought that the organisations of distribution are too imperfect, and that the consumers generally do not get sufficiently the value when prices are cut down. I attach less importance to letters which I have received couched in identic language, than to some other letters, which are evidently genuine. I have not had time to make an inquiry as to what the facts are in regard to distant villages, but I have made inquiries, since yesterday, as to how tea is sold in parts of East London. An officer connected with the Customs went round to 24 different places, in order to see how the article is sold, and at what price. He bought a halfpenny worth of tea in each place, and it has been weighed since, and the samples work out at the following prices per lb. Sample No. 1 weighed ·49 of an ounce, and it worked out at 2s. 8½d. per lb. The other samples worked out 3s. 9d., 3s. 7d., 3s. 11d., 2s. 11d., 2s. 10d., 3s. 7d., and so on. One of the common facts of the system is that the dealers refuse to sell half-an-ounce. They say "We cannot give half-an-ounce, but here is a packet for a halfpenny." Now, I say, that that is a very unsatisfactory system. Of course, there must be a large profit when an article is sold in these small quantities; but when we find that tea which is not worth 1s. per lb., or even if it be worth more than 1s., say 1s. 3d. or 1s. 4d., costs the retail consumer 3s. per lb., I say that that is not a satisfactory state of things. What I want to call attention to is this, that by the system of selling so much for a given sum dealers have it in their power to take the whole of the concession from the working classes. With regard to the House Duty, I entirely differ from the hon. Member. He seems to think that the benefit of the relief will not be appreciated, but that is because he takes a grandiose view of relief and of income. I know, from communications I have received, that the reduction measured by the hon. Member at 15s. a year, is a matter of considerable personal importance to persons occupying houses between £20 and £40 a year.

MR. PICTON: Fifteen shillings a year would be the reduction to a man occupying a house at £60 a year.

*MR. GOSCHEN: It is not only the question of the amount of the tax, but of other burdens in addition. If we add together the whole amount of duties paid by this class, it will be found that they are very heavy compared with those paid by the wealthy, and they feel that this 15s. is given to them as an acknowledgment of the principle that they should not be taxed more than is proportionate to their means. I have endeavoured, in constructing the Budget, to consider, as fairly as I could, the claims of every class of taxpayer. I have endeavoured, not only to consider the absolute pecuniary relief that can be afforded, but also the claims of classes of taxpayers all round, and the hon. Member is unjust in calling this a class Budget. I have endeavoured to lighten the burdens of taxation as far as I fairly could, and I believe that considerable gain will accrue to the working classes from the reduction of the Tea Duty.

(3.28.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I do not rise for the purpose of discussing the Budget generally, but one observation made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer is so important that it ought not to be passed over without notice. It is one which, as a principle of finance, may have a large and extensive future operation. The right hon. Gentleman spoke with reference to the House Duty, and said that he attached value to it, as establishing the principle of graduation in taxation. He has said that it is not merely the money he considers, but the fact that the rate at which the tax should be levied should be less in the case of persons with small incomes. That is a very important principle of finance, and is the one which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has adopted as his basis in dealing with the Inhabited House Duty. This may be only a small beginning, but it opens up a large prospect in the future. I believe that it is a sound principle of finance, and it is one which I am not sorry the right hon. Gentlemen should have adopted as the principle upon which he is, more or less, constructing his Budget. I thought it necessary to take notice of this because the principle itself is far more important than the application of it the Chancellor of the Exchequer is making to-day. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has given an explanation of his statement the other day in reference to the dealers in tea. I have myself received a large number of telegrams from dealers in tea, complaining very much of what was said the other night. They seem to have taken amiss what the right hon. Gentleman said, but I hope now that they will prove themselves in no way open to the imputation they supposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer cast upon them, by giving the consumers full advantage of the concession made in the Budget proposal. We shall have an opportunity, upon the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, of referring to the Budget as a whole, and I do not wish to enter on the subject now; the only criticism I am now disposed to make as to the Budget is that there are rather too many bites to too many cherries. I would rather there had been a larger dealing with fewer subjects. I am sure we must all feel that this Tea Duty cannot remain upon its present footing. In reference to the Inhabited House Duty I am not sure that I can quite agree with my hon. Friend below the Gangway. I believe that a larger dealing with it would have been a great relief. The duty is unequal in itself, and is felt to be extremely hard. On small houses the duty is levied to the full value of the house, but we know that on large houses, large country houses especially, the assessment is ludicrously below the value. A man who lives in a house of £50 or £100 has his house valued to the full extent, but a man who lives in what, practically, is a palace is assessed at £300 or £400. This inequality is in itself a great objection to the tax; the highest value bears the lowest burden of taxation. I do not know that this can be redressed except by getting rid of the tax altogether. I know that there have been strong desires expressed for the remission of a penny from the Income Tax; but it should be observed that the remission of the whole of the Inhabited House Duty would amount to less than the remission of a penny on the Income Tax. Of course the remission of a penny on the Income Tax would be the greater boon to the richer classes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! We are now engaged with a particular Resolution having reference to the Tea

Duty, and it would be against the usual practice to discuss the general effect of the Resolutions, as may be done when the Bill itself is before the House.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The Income Tax Resolution comes next.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I bow to your decision, Sir; but my excuse must be that I was following the example of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE CHAIRMAN: A reference by way of illustration in a general way may be permitted, but not entrance into a subject beyond the scope of the Resolution.

MR. CRAIG (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Before we pass from the subject, I should like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is possible to introduce a measure to compel the sale of tea by weight whenever a purchaser demands it?

MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I should be glad to learn on what date the reduction of the duty is proposed.

(3.40.) MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): There is this disadvantage in taking off part of a duty, that the cost of collection remains the same whether the duty is 6d. or 4d. I rejoice in the fact of the reduction, for I believe that in a short time the Tea Duty will have to go altogether. I am one of those who would gladly see the duty taken off. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman need have any fear, if the duty is abolished, that some portion of the community will escape their portion of taxation. I do not quite see how a man can do that unless he is a very exceptional person indeed. I would remind the Committee that those who pay the largest share of this tax are the poorest people among taxpayers. Our system lays the greatest burden on the weakest shoulders. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer could see his way to abolishing the Tea Duty, and adding something in the shape of a regulation of the Death Duties, he would do something to remedy this mistake, and I hope this view will be accepted in the future. A successful Government will endeavour to make the path of the poor smoother, and certainly any proposal to lighten the burdens of the poor will have our support. For the reductions the right hon. Gentleman has made I thank him, though I wish he had been a little bolder. I hope future Chancellors will continue the work he has begun.

*(3.42.) SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I only rise to confirm the statement of my hon. Friend the Member for Tottenham (Mr. Howard), as to the feeling of the retail tea traders. I wish to express my regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has dealt with the Tea Duty instead of the Income Tax, and I differ entirely from the view expressed by the hon. Member for Bristol.

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): We have wandered away somewhat from the incidence of the duty before us. I wish to point out how the duty works in the per centage paid. Tea at 4d. per lb. has, I believe, been sold for years past in the London market, and recently I saw tea siftings quoted at 2d. per lb. Yet this equally pays the duty with the high-priced teas. The new duty on the tea at 2d. will be 200 per cent., while on tea at 2s. 7½d. it will be only 20 per cent. Whatever may be said in favour of or against an *ad valorem* duty, this at least must be allowed, that the richer classes escape the burden of taxation to an extraordinary degree. I should like to say a word or two in vindication of the poorer dealers in tea. I do not think anyone who knows the circumstances of the poorer class of shopkeepers in London, those who retail to the poorer classes, will think their lot at all an enviable one. In this one article of tea, that which is represented as the sale of 1lb. means the weighing and wrapping of, perhaps, 32 ½ oz. parcels and 32 payments. It is hardly fair, and does not help us to a right judgment, to tabulate this as the sale of 1lb. in one parcel. You must take into consideration these conditions in contrasting the prices charged to small consumers with the prime cost of the article.

(3.44.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): It seems to me we are engaged in the somewhat ungracious task of looking a gift horse in the mouth. Now, in my view, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not see his way to give us a free breakfast table, he has made a great mistake in not giving us free education, which has been almost promised by the Government, and which we are bound to have. It is a great mistake to make a remission in a way that is not sufficiently felt; the right hon. Gentleman might have given it in a manner that would have been thoroughly felt throughout the length and breadth of the land. I disclaim all sympathy with the view of the hon. Baronet opposite in reference to the Income Tax, and I was struck with the remarks in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect to the effect of taxation on the richer and poorer classes. I am not sorry to hear the defence of the grocers, and I admit their difficulties; still I hope the observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be appreciated, and that their effect will be to assist the consumers to obtain the benefit of remissions of taxation.

*(3.46.) MR. GOSCHEN: As to the time when we propose this reduction shall take effect I mentioned, at an earlier period, that I am making every inquiry to find what would cause the least disturbance in the trade. While, on the one hand, I have had many desires expressed that the change shall not take place at a very early period, on the other hand I have had remonstrances against delay. My answer to either must be the same, that I hope to give the information within the next couple of days. In reply to what has been said by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Halley Stewart) I have to say that I did not intend to make any charge against grocers and others. I have been charged with exaggerating the difference between the cost price of tea and the price at which it is sold to the consumers, and I produced the figures to show that, from whatever cause it may arise, I attached no blame to anybody; the difference is extremely wide; it is for the Committee and for the public to judge if they consider the difference was exaggerated at all.

MR. PICTON: There seems to be an impression that I have an objection to the reduction of the Inhabited House Duty, but that is not so. As between the two I prefer the abolition of the Tea Duty.

MR. CRAIG: The right hon. Gentleman has overlooked the question I addressed to him, whether it is within the power of the Government to provide for the sale of tea by weight in the same way as the retail sale of coal is regulated?

*MR. GOSCHEN: That is a matter upon which I cannot answer off-hand; it requires some consideration, and is not without difficulty. There is the convenience of the small consumers to be considered, and the question of interfering with the progress of the trade. It is, however, a matter worthy of attention, and this it shall have.

Question put, and agreed to.

INCOME TAX.

2. Resolved that, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Six Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the same Act,—

In England, the Duty of Three Pence;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Two Pence Farthing;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of "The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876," for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds.

CURRANTS.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

3. "That in lieu of the Duty of Customs now chargeable upon Currants there shall, on and after the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, be charged and paid upon Currants imported into Great Britain and Ireland the duty following (that is to say):—

		£	s.	d.
Currants . . .	the cwt.	0	2	0

*(3.50.) SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): Will the right hon. Gentleman now make some statement as to the time when the alteration must take effect? The currant trade is a season trade. I am informed that imports take place between September and December. So

that large stocks are now held by grocers and others in this country, and, unless some drawback is allowed, the taking off of the duty at once will cause great disturbance to trade. I congratulate the right. hon. Gentleman on having made a very useful remission, especially to the poorer classes, but I would suggest that he should allow a drawback upon stocks if the change is enforced at once, or that he should postpone the remission until, say, September 1st.

*MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I was about to make the same suggestion. I have received letters pointing out that the currant trade is entirely a season trade, and that postponement to the 1st of August would be a convenience to allow dealers to dispose of last season's stock. If the right hon. Gentleman will consult the trade, I am assured he will find that there is a general view in favour of fixing the date as August or September 1st., but I merely give utterance to the views of correspondents, and profess no knowledge on the subject.

*CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N.): I also have received communications from Co-operative Societies, strongly urging that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should make this concession to the requirements of the trade.

MR. CRAIG: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, there is one question I should like to put. He has told us that, as a compensation for this large concession, Greece has agreed to make reductions in the import duties upon cotton yarns and other productions of this country. I would ask, has not Greece commercial treaties with other countries in which the "most favoured nation clause" is operative, and under which those nations will claim similar reductions, unless the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in making the bargain, has provided that the reductions of import duties by Greece shall be given exclusively to this Kingdom?

(3.35.) MR. GOSCHEN: I have received a large number of communications asking for further time before the remission of the duty on currants shall come into force, and, on the other hand, I have received remonstrances against delay. My answer must be as before, that I am making inquiries through the officers of Customs, and I hope to be in a position in a day or two to declare the decision fo the Government. Of course, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have no objection to the slightly-increased receipts which a postponement of the remission would afford, but my desire is to meet the views of all classes engaged in the trade. Of course a drawback is out of the question, it is only a question of postponing the date. As to the question of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Craig) no doubt Greece has "most favoured nation clauses" in her commercial treaties, but providing we get the advantage of the importation of our manufactures into Greece upon a reduced tariff, I presume the hon. Gentleman, as a Free Trader, would not claim that we should have the protection of Greece against the imports of other countries. That would be a fair condition to make if we reduced a duty we otherwise had no inclination to reduce, but we reduce the Currant Duty quite as much upon its own merits as on the desire of the producing country.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The Chancellor of the Exchequer is put under pressure to postpone the relief from the Currant Duty in the interest of the traders, but I think we have primarily to think of the interest of the public generally. I do not think it is of any advantage to the public to postpone the remission until August or September. I should imagine that the public desire to have their currants cheap at the earliest moment. I hope that will be taken into consideration, as well as the interest of traders. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must not think himself under any pressure from this side of the House to continue the duty longer than he thinks right.

*MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): Is it not the fact that between August and September the importations are small in amount?

*MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, that is so. It is not a question of cheapening the cost to consumers; it is a question whether those traders who have their stocks should lose the amount of the duty they have paid, and it is their contention that this will not be affected by importations until September. A great deal depends upon the amount of stock necessary to keep in the trade. In the tea trade, be it remembered, the amount of stock is much smaller than in other trades. But I am examining the whole question.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if the traders who have stocks in hand have it not in their power to keep up the price until they resume importations under the reduced duty?

*MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, that is an argument that has been put to myself, and there is force in it.

Question put, and agreed to.

SPARKLING WINE.

4. Resolved, That from and after the date of the passing of an Act embodying this Resolution, there shall, upon Wine rendered sparkling or effervescent and bottled in a warehouse, be charged and paid the same duty as is imposed by the "Customs (Wine Duty) Act, 1888," upon Sparkling Wine imported in bottle (that is to say):

	£	s.	d.
The Gallon	0	2	6

This duty is to be paid in addition to the duty in respect of alcoholic strength under "The Customs Amendment Act, 1886."

AMENDMENT OF LAW.

5. Resolved, That it is expedient to amend the Law relating to the Customs and Inland Revenue.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. COURTNEY in the Chair.]

Clause 2.

(4.3.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Before the 2nd clause is passed I should just like to ask the representative of the India Office whether it is usual, instead of saying in each case "The Secretary for India in Council," to insert a provision to the effect that wherever the term "The Secretary of State" is used, it shall mean "The Secretary for India in Council." It seems to me very misleading, and I think it would be better in every case to say "The Secretary for India in Council." I should like to know what is the usual practice.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have no doubt that the usual practice has been adhered to. All these Acts are drawn by one draftsman, and there is a common form.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I wish to remind the Committee that this Bill was closured after 10 minutes' discussion on the Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) and in the absence of the representative of the India Office. I am anxious for an explanation on several important points with regard to this clause, and, hitherto, we have had no proper opportunity for discussing the matter, or for obtaining an explanation. I wish to give the Under-Secretary for India (Sir J. Gorst) an opportunity of giving us some explanation, and, with that view, I propose to move to amend this clause by reducing the amount proposed to be granted by the sum of £500,000. There are many questions on which I should like to obtain information. It seems to me that this is a notable instance of that which I have several times drawn the attention of the House to, namely, the abuse, as I regard it, of the system of guaranteeing Indian Railway Companies. I am very much disposed to sympathise with what, judging from his action, appears to be the view of the Under Secretary for India, namely, that the less the House of Commons interferes with Indian affairs the better. An exception ought, however, in my opinion, to be made with regard to financial matters. When it is necessary to come to Parliament for powers to deal with financial matters, it is well that some attention should be paid to the demand, and that the debate should not be closured after a 10 minutes' interval. I think this is a notable example of the extent to which the system of Government guarantees is carried. I am told that there are hon. Members who intend to oppose this clause altogether. I do not quite sympathise with them, because I am very much in favour of Indian railways being acquired by the State. Therefore, I am afraid I cannot vote with my hon. Friends. My opposition is not directed against the purchase of this railway, but is confined to the extravagant terms on which the projected purchase is based. I am afraid that we are bound to these extravagant terms, but I object to the vicious system under which we are continually guaranteeing new Indian railways.

When the construction of railways in India was in its infancy it was wise and just that considerable guarantees should be given, and the profit paid to the promoters of the early lines was legitimate. This South Indian Railway is not one of those old railways, but is a modern line. I think the Under Secretary mentioned 1873 as the date at which the railway was guaranteed. It has never approached paying the guarantee. It has been a continual loss to the Government of India, and now they want to buy at a very large premium—I believe a premium of about 30 per cent. It must have been a very unprofitable contract; and if the people of India have had to pay a very heavy fine on account of the improvidence of such transactions, we certainly ought not to go on giving fresh guarantees, as has been done in the course of the last few years. I understood the other day that it was not proposed to give any more guarantees. I hope my impression on that point will be confirmed, and that we shall avoid such jobs in the future by having no more guarantees. I cannot understand how there is to be a profit out of the transaction which this Bill is intended to authorise. I should like the Under Secretary for India to tell us what is now proposed. I observe a very peculiar provision in the Bill, namely, that the Government should raise money by loan or by Debentures, or in the shape of Capital Stock. I know that in several cases these railways have been bought up by the Government of India—I think to the advantage of the State. The Bombay and Baroda Railway has not yet been bought up by the Government of India; but the Government have leased the railway on certain terms, and the result is that a very large addition has been made to the profits of the line—profits which are, to a great extent, earned by the leased line. I think that the £100 shares of that line now stand at something like £185. I am, however, as I have said, not opposed to the purchase of this railway. I only want to know that the terms are not extravagant, and that nothing is conceded to the railway beyond what, in the strictest terms of our bargain, we are bound to concede. I beg to move that the sum mentioned in the clause be reduced by £500,000.

Sir G. Campbell

Amendment proposed, Clause 2, page 2, line 15, to leave out £5,200,000, to insert £4,700,000.—(*Sir G. Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words '£5,200,000' stand part of the Clause."

*(4.12.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I do not think I should be in order in following the hon. Gentleman in all the remarks on Indian railway policy which he has engrafted on his Amendment. But it will, perhaps, shorten the debate if I so far follow the hon. Member as to explain what is meant by this clause of the Bill. In this case it is not for the Committee to sanction any guarantee. That was done long ago. It is an inheritance which we have obtained from our forefathers. I believe that if it were in order to discuss the past with the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, I could show that the conduct of the Government in former days in guaranteeing these railways was not so extravagant and foolish as he seems to think. That is, however, necessarily a matter of ancient history with which we have at the present moment nothing to do. We came into an inheritance under which the Government of India was bound to pay the guaranteed interest on this railway, and we shall have to go on paying it.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Will you mention the date at which the guarantee was given?

*SIR J. GORST: It was long before the year 1873; because in that year two railways then guaranteed were amalgamated under the name of the South Indian Railway. Since that time the Government have had to pay the guaranteed interest. They have to pay 5 per cent. on upwards of £3,000,000 of Stock. The hon. Member for Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor) shakes his head. Perhaps he will allow me first to make my statement, and then he can make his. This was the state of things before the purchase was effected. The Indian Government had to pay 5 per cent. on £3,066,344 of Stock. That amounts to a sum of £153,317 a year. It also had to pay 4¾ per cent. on a further sum of £142,164 of Stock. That amounts to £6,753. The amount of guaranteed interest which the Government, therefore, had to pay on the Stock of the Railway Company was £160,070. They had, besides that, to pay a guaranteed interest on Debentures. They had to pay 3½ per cent. on the £756,300 of Debentures, amounting to £26,470, and 3¼ per cent. upon £313,700 of Debentures, amounting to £10,195. The total guaranteed interest which the Government had to pay on Debentures, therefore, amounted to £36,665, making a grand total which the Government of India had to pay to the company of £196,735. That was the state of things on the 1st of March of the present year. On that date the Secretary for India had the right to purchase the railway. Of course, it was his duty to consider whether it was to the interest of the taxpayers of India that he should exercise that right or not. The price he was to give was not a matter of discretion, as the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy seems to think. The bargain was made in the year 1873, and, if purchased at all, the railway had to be purchased at a certain specified rate. The Secretary of State had no choice in the matter. He could buy it at that rate or could let it alone. The price was settled by the contract made in 1873. It was a sum equal in amount to the value of all the shares and Stock of the company, calculated according to the mean market value during the three years immediately preceding the expiration of the year during the six months after the expiration of which notice was given. The notice was given in March. The Secretary of State considered whether it would be for the benefit of the taxpayer of India that he should buy the railway at this price. He assumed he would be able to borrow the money in the English Money Market at the rate of 3 per cent.; at par. That is the assumption, and if the Committee will pass the Bill and allow the Secretary of State to operate upon the London Market no doubt that can be done. If the Committee choose to stop the Bill until advantageous terms are not available, the blame of imposing an additional burden upon the taxpayers of India will rest with the Committee and not with the Secretary of State. If the money can be borrowed, the amount required is the amount stated in this clause of the Bill.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the premium to be paid?

*SIR J. GORST: No premium is to be paid, but the price is settled in the contract.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the price?

*SIR J. GORST: I have read it once. The price to be paid is to be equal to the amount of the value of the shares.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the value according to the calculation?

*SIR J. GORST: I will tell the hon. Member if he will not interrupt me. According to the calculation, the sum of money which is to be paid is £5,267,557.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the percentage on the original capital?

*SIR J. GORST: That is the price which is to be paid. I hope the rest of the Committee will understand the point. There is a contract fixing a certain sum of money. That sum of money is paid by the Secretary of State, and thereupon the line becomes the property of the Government. That being the sum, the interest, at 3 per cent. upon that sum, is £158,026, and there is a payment to be made to the Bank of England for carrying out the transaction, which amounts to £360 per £1,000,000 of Stock. That payment amounts, therefore, to £1,896. That is the cost of carrying out the transaction, making the total annual charge in the future, £159,922. Well then, inasmuch as the charge in question is £197,000, it is obvious that it is to the interest of the taxpayer of India that you should free India of that charge of £196,000 by incurring the liability for a future charge of £160,000. The annual saving to be effected to the taxpayer of India from the time that the transaction is completed will be £36,813. Now, that is the whole history of the transaction. The Secretary of State, having found that he could effect a saving of that amount to the taxpayer of India, gave notice to the Railway Company. The Government is now liable to pay that sum to the Railway Company. It only requires the sanction of the House to enable the Secretary of State to raise the money in the most convenient way—in the way in which it would be the least burdensome to the taxpayer of India to fulfil the obligation which is already incurred, and which the Secretary of State is legally bound to carry out. This explanation has been as short as I could make it, but I hope it has been satisfactory to the Committee. All that is really now required is that the House should sanction the Secretary of State borrowing in the London Money Market the sum of money which he has contracted to pay, because by doing it he will relieve the taxpayers of India from the obligation to which they would have been otherwise subjected.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I really do not know why the Under Secretary of State should have such an extreme objection to explain to us the exact terms in which this railway is to be taken over. The bargain was not that the railway should be taken over at a fixed sum, but that it should be taken over at a price equal to the average price for three years succeeding the date of the notice. That involves a very considerable premium upon the original capital. I want to know what the price was at which each £100 of the railway was taken over? The market price, I gather, was £130, but I wish the Under Secretary to tell us exactly what the sum was.

*Sir J. GORST: I misunderstood the hon. Member's question. If he merely asks what was the mean market value I may tell him that is 131·116279.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Now I understand it has been taken over at a premium of a little over 31 per cent. The result is that the railway, which has never approached paying the sum required to meet the guarantee, is to be taken over at a premium of 31 per cent. Such being the case, the calculation of the Secretary of State is that he can borrow money at 3 per cent., and that the result will be a large gain to the taxpayers of India. I want to know whether the Under Secretary can tell us deliberately whether there is any reason for believing that he can borrow in the English Money Market at par at 3 per cent. A further point I want to know is whether this £196,753 is payable annually—whether it is a permanent or a terminal annuity? If it is a terminal annuity is there not something which ought to be deducted?

*Sir J. GORST: The payment on one line is for 999 years, and on the other for 99 years. With regard to the price at which the Indian Government can borrow money, the hon. Member would do well to study the Money Market and the Times. My impression is that the Stock is above par.

(4.26.) Mr. A. O CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India has had the very great advantage of being able to lay before the House a satisfactory and complete answer to the questions addressed to him from above the Gangway; but those questions were of so elementary a kind that one might almost have been spared them. My objection to this clause is of a very different character. If hon. Members had the time and convenience, I should invite them to examine for themselves the figures which bear on this matter in the account which has been furnished to us by the Indian Authorities. They will find that no two of the statements furnished to the House of Commons are in accord with each other. The Indian Financial Statement with regard to railways, the statement of the moral and material progress of India, and Blue Books which relate to railways, the annual Report with regard to administration of railway work and other things, are all different. It is perfectly impossible to make any two of them agree. The same observation applies with respect to the figures of Indian finance; they are absolutely misleading. With regard to the loss by exchange, those railway accounts are so manipulated that it is almost possible to produce any result you set yourself to produce with respect to the railways. But we have had lately, during the last two years, some further and better light in regard to their condition than we had previously. I mean a Report by an officer—I think his name is Colonel Conway Gordon—in which he deals at very much greater length and more clearly than any of his predecessors with these railway accounts. What do we learn? I ventured to say in the House some months ago that the accounts of these railways were cooked. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was very much shocked, and he said it was an unworthy suggestion; but I will quote an authority, which I think the Government cannot reasonably object to, and that is the authority of the *Times* newspaper, in an article reviewing this very matter of the Guaranteed Railways, including the South Indian Railways. It says—

> "That from first to last the grand total loss—actual and prospective—from the Guaranteed Railways is set down at £34,844,000."

"The State lines," the writer of the article says,

> "Have been always known to be unprofitable as a commercial undertaking, however defensible for military reasons;"

but there is an incorrect impression as to the Guaranteed Lines. They have been looked on in the past as yielding a steady revenue to the State, but now we are told the state of things is the very opposite. The explanation is that a sort of juggle has been practised over the shifting value of the rupee. The liabilities of the Guaranteed Lines have been incurred in sterling, and in sterling must be paid, while the receipts have been counted in rupees at an advancing rate of exchange, thus making the railways to appear what in reality they are not. That is a perfectly fair criticism, though I quote it from the *Times*, and I think it applies to every branch of Indian administration, as well as the railways. But in order to show how impossible it is to arrive at an exact financial estimate in connection with this proposed transaction, I find from the Revenue Account, that from the opening of the railway to the 31st March, 1888, the line has cost the Government 1,917,313 tens of rupees. The Railway Report gives the loss down to the 13th June, 1888, as £1,948,000. These two accounts are absolutely irreconcilable, because the one which gives the loss in sterling shows a total which is much greater than that which gives the loss in rupees, whatever rate of exchange you may take. According to the Act of 1874, the rate of exchange was to be 1s. 11d., so that on this item alone there is an error of nearly £250,000. Under these circumstances, it is not unnatural that inquiries should be made as to the exact figures, whether in rupees or in sterling, that the Government bases its proposal upon when it asks us to agree to this Vote. The Government say that the adoption of this scheme will enable them to economise to the extent of £36,000 a year. Well, I demur to that statement. I think it proceeds upon a fallacy—the fallacy that because a certain half-year's accounts of the company showed so small a margin of receipts over working expenses that the Government had to pay for that half-year a large sum of money to meet the guarantee interest, therefore that liability is certain to recur annually for 999 years. I say that this is a fallacy, and I base my objection to it on the accounts of the railway itself, from which I find that so far from such an amount of money being required in a normal half-year, no such sum has ever been required before, and it often happens that the earnings of the railway have proved nearly sufficient to meet the liability. Now, Sir, the capital expended to the 31st December, 1888, was £4,695,000. For that year, the net revenue, after paying working expenses, was £160,000. The amount required to meet the guaranteed interest on the capital paid up and expended was, I think, £213,604. If you deduct the net revenue for the year at £160,000 from the total guaranteed interest, the balance for which the Government is really responsible is only £53,345. I do not know the rate at which the Government of India can borrow money in the London Money Market at the present time; but taking the account for the year 1888—the last year for which I, at any rate, have been enabled to obtain a complete account—it is perfectly clear that it requires nothing like £5,000,000 to meet the liabilities. I think the sum of £1,700,000 at the very outside would amply and adequately provide any funds necessary to secure the annual income for meeting any liabilities on the part of the company. If the Indian Government are able to raise money at 3 per cent., you do not want more than £1,750,000 to meet this liability. Now, the Government, for some reason or other, have apparently jumped at the opportunity of acting under the terms of the contract with the company, and have given notice of their intention to purchase the railway, and to purchase it under circumstances which are abnormally unfavourable. If they had considered the amount which they had been called upon to pay over and above the net Revenue during the last 10 years, they would have found that they did not require anything like the amount of money they now ask for. The arrangement as to price was entered into in the original contract in 1874, and it was practically the same as was embodied in the contract with the Carnatic Company 16 or 18 years before that. When the Government chooses, at a certain period, to give notice to buy up the line on the average of three years' price of the share capital, is it not perfectly plain that the market value of the share capital has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the financial history of the line? Whether the line is making an enormous fortune or whether it is a hopeless failure, the Government guarantee of 5 per cent. will always keep the Stock up to the figures at which it now stands, namely, 131, and that is the price which is secured by the shareholders whenever they wish to part with their shares. In the case of a railway which, as a going concern, pays such a dividend as to justify a premium, the shareholder gets credit for that. Suppose the Indian Government purchases a line, which is very successful as a business concern, you will be in the position in which, if you had not purchased, and the company had gone on working the line, you, as a Government, would not have been called upon to pay a single farthing in respect of the guarantee of 5 per cent.; and in such a case there could be no reason for asking the House to make an advance for that purpose. But take the other side of the question. Suppose the line is in a bad commercial condition. Do you not see that you lose by making the purchase, because at present you are bound only to pay the 5 per cent., which you have guaranteed, whereas under this Bill you are not only going to make a capital payment which represents a liability equal to 5 per cent., but you are also taking upon yourself the responsibility of working a commercial concern which is hopelessly unsuccessful. On either horn of this dilemma, then, it appears that this proposal of the Government is an unwise one. So far as the shareholders of the line are concerned, it is a matter of supreme indifference to them whether or not the Government buy up the undertaking, for they, at any rate, are secure of 5 per cent. on their investment. It appears to me, on the grounds I have stated, that the Government are making a very great mistake, and I invite the House to consider the arguments I have put before it. Those arguments have not been met by any statement we have heard from the Under Secretary for India. I agree with the observations which have been made with regard to Guaranteed Lines, and that to continue our old policy as to them under the present circumstances would be a very great mistake. It may have had some justification for the past, but there is no doubt that the real secret of success in railway management is the incentive to personal gain and to dividend earning. Only the other day, at the meeting of the Legislative Council, the Public Works Minister, in a discussion on the Budget, spoke of the admirable example set by certain Indian Railway Companies which did not ask for guarantees from the State. I believe if the Government had refused to buy this line, and had left the company to work it under the strict supervision which the State is authorised to exercise, they would have caused this line, which has been increasing its traffic (both goods and passengers) for the last five or six years, to have earned the dividend of 5 per cent. for itself; and if the company had failed to keep the line in repair, if it had failed in any way to do its duty, the Government would have had it in their power, under the Act of 1874, to do what repairs were necessary and to deduct the cost of those repairs from the guaranteed interest. I very much doubt whether the Government have exercised such a power in any case. If they had, I am inclined to think that this question of buying up lines would never have arisen. I invite the Committee to observe this fact, that we have not had a single word from the right hon. Gentleman as to the amount or condition of the rolling stock, as to the condition of the line, or as to the repairs which are likely to be required immediately after the Government takes over the concern. The right hon. Gentleman, too, has not mentioned that there is to remain an undischarged liability of £420,000 on account of the Debenture Bonds.

*SIR J. GORST: That is so. The Debenture Stock is irredeemable.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: There are Debenture Bonds and there is Debenture Stock. As I understand it, the sum of money provided for in the Bill will include the purchase money and a capital sum of £1,700,000 for Debentures, which are to be paid off when they mature. But over and above all, there is a sum of £420,000 which is to remain as a charge on the undertaking. Indeed, it is very difficult to make out what is the exact liability this Bill represents. We do not know the amount of liabilities ahead, or the condition of the line, or the amount and condition of the rolling stock. Yet these are points on which the Committee might reasonably have expected information.

*(4.48.) SIR J. GORST: I think the hon. Member is mistaken in his ideas as to the supposed disastrous results of this proposal. He supposed that the railway might turn out to be an extremely bad concern, and would not pay working expenses. Well, the Government in such a case would not be obliged to go on with it. But, in regard to this particular line, there is no prospect that it will get worse than it is. What is the state of things now? The Government is liable to pay £197,000. Under the Bill it will be liable to pay £160,000, or a saving of £36,800, so that, even if the line only just pays its working expenses, £36,800 will be saved to the Indian taxpayer. But, supposing the line turns out to be an extremely good enterprise, and itself pays not only the guaranteed interest, but has a large surplus of over £200,000 beyond that at present, the Government, under such a state of things, would be relieved of the payment of the guarantee, but would not share in the surplus.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Yet the Government is entitled to a half share.

*SIR J. GORST: Yes; I am wrong in that. But if this Bill is carried, the Government will not only be relieved of the payment of the interest, but the £200,000 will go into the pockets of the taxpayers, so that on either horn of the dilemma the Government would have been a gainer by the transaction. The hon. Member has complained that I have given no information to him about the condition of the railway. My reason for not giving it to him is that such information is not relevant to the question before the Committee. If it had been a discretion as to purchasing the railway, such information would have been extremely relevant and would have had to be taken into consideration; but this is a case in which the price was fixed many years since, and we are bound to buy at that price or not to buy at all. It is because it will be a profitable thing for the Indian Revenue to purchase the line at this price that this transaction is submitted to the Committee for approval, and I hope that this Bill will now be allowed to pass.

(4.53.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: I think the real answer of the Government to the criticisms which have been advanced is to be found in the closing words of the right hon. Gentleman. The Secretary of State has apparently gone to the company and said, "I will buy the line." He has entered into an agreement, which is now of some months standing, for the purchase of the line, and whether that agreement is reasonable or not—I think it is fatuously foolish and extravagant, although the right hon. Gentleman thinks it wise and judicious—the House has no option but to pass the Bill, and is merely going through a pure formality in doing so. It is all a foregone conclusion. True, it is scarcely a dignified position for this Committee to be placed in; and I must complain of the power which enables the Secretary of State to enter into a large negotiation involving the expenditure of millions of money without first obtaining the sanction of the House.

(4.55.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I ask leave to withdraw the Amendment, because I am satisfied, that on the whole, the proposal of the Government will be an advantage to India. But I hope we shall take warning from the result of this transaction and not enter into such imprudent engagements in the future.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clauses agreed to.

Bill reported to the House without Amendment.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS V.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £17,640, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, for the

Expenses of Various Services (other than Consular) in connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, and the Expenses of the Liberated African Department."

(4.59.) MR. HANBURY (Preston): This is, I think, one of the most unsatisfactory Votes which comes before the Committee. The object sought to be attained by the expenditure of money in this direction is no doubt good, but the means employed to bring about the object have been of a most unsatisfactory character. The Vote, too, appears on the Paper without practically any information being provided as to the results achieved by this large expenditure of money. In addition to this, I would point out that this Vote does not represent the expenditure incurred in the suppression of the Slave Trade. As it is, the results are very small indeed considering the loss we annually sustain in Slave Trade hunting in Africa, and the vast amount of life sacrificed in this miserable business. The fact is, that the result of our whole expenditure is only about 130 to 150 slaves liberated from year to year. This is very unsatisfactory when we remember that the number of slaves we liberate only amount to 1-20th or 1-30th of the miserable creatures captured in the interior of Africa. I should like to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the total cost we incur in the suppression of the Slave Trade on the East Coast of Africa. Of course, the expenditure, properly so-called, is stated here; but I want to know what is the additional cost incurred by our Navy? There is no doubt it is a very unsatisfactory work for the Navy to perform, and it is also to a certain extent demoralising to our men, there being constant complaints of the service that has to be carried on upon the East Coast of Africa. Besides the cost to which our Navy is put on this service, I want to know what results are shown for the continuance of this system; also what causes are in operatain on the African Coast to prevent its being worked effectually; what nations there are whose flags still cover the Slave Trade; whether France is still offering obstructions to its suppression; or whether there is any other country whose flag is being abused in a similar manner? I also want to know what has been the result of the suppression of domestic slavery at Pemba? I would further ask is it not possible to go about the suppression of this trade in a totally different fashion? The present system is practically obsolete. It is a relic of the old days of sailing vessels, when the best way of suppressing the trade was by sea; but those days have gone by. We have now penetrated the interior of Africa, and we know how slave-hunting is managed. From all that is told to me by people who understand the subject we shall do more for the suppression of the Slave Trade, and at a much less cost, if we take up a position in the interior and stop the trade at its source—that is to say, if we were to take up positions on the main caravan routes, and stop the trade along those routes. The advantage of this plan would be that, even if the present amount of the trade continued, we should save the enormous expenditure of life which is at present incurred in carrying the slaves from the interior to the coast. I regard this as an important matter, and I am confirmed in my view by Commander Cameron, who states, in an article contributed to one of the Reviews, that it is quite possible, by establishing military stations along the lines of route from the Great Lakes, to stop the caravans, which he says could be done for from £50,000 to £70,000 per annum. I do hope that the Foreign Office, looking not so much at the importance of the English trade with Africa as at the importance of effectually suppressing the Slave Trade, will not let the so-called understanding between ourselves and Germany as to the sphere of action of the two Powers remain in its present unsatisfactory state. The Great African Lakes are of the first importance in the consideration of this question. Who is to be master of those lakes? That is a point which is still undecided; and although we are told that Germany has undertaken not to do anything outside her own sphere of interest, which is almost defined with regard to the Great Lakes, I say that in the interests of Africa, which is being depopulated at the rate of about 2,000,000 a year, it is time we came to some understanding with Germany as to who should be in a position to go to those lakes, and so tap and destroy the Slave Trade at its main source. Or, at any rate, if we cannot come to an understanding as to who should be master, why cannot we come to an understanding as to why we should not work with Germany in the neighbourhood of the Great Lakes, just as we have come to an understanding with Germany as to the suppression of the Slave Trade on the sea-coast? If something is not done in the way of such an understanding with the great Power which, with ourselves, is becoming a predominant power in that part of the world, it may happen that if the Slave Trade is allowed to go on, when we come to deal with those lake districts we may find that instead of a trade being open to us there, there will be nothing but a desert, which will be of no use to anybody. I do not propose to move a reduction of the Vote; but I do hope that the Government will take up this question in a more masterly and businesslike way than has hitherto been the case. I cannot but think we are muddling away a great deal of money with but little or no result. If the Government will only adopt the suggestion I have made as to occupying stations in the interior along the route to the Great Lakes, I believe they will do away with at least nine-tenths of the horrors which are constantly occurring in the conveyance of slaves to the coast.

(5.10.) SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): Although I do not believe we have done all we could in the suppression of the Slave Trade, I believe we have done a great deal of good, and I trust that the Government may see their way to support any operations it may be seemed desirable to take in the interior of Africa for the suppression of this traffic at its source. I venture to think that it is beyond the power of the Government to establish military stations in the interior of Africa; nevertheless, I hope they will support the many endeavours now being made to open up that great Continent for the introduction of commerce and other civilising influences which will tend to stop this infamous traffic at its source.

(5.12.) MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I desire to support the argument urged by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury), and in doing so I have to state that I was about the first Member of this House to attack the principle on which the suppression of the Slave Trade was carried on by this country, and the mode in which the work of suppression was administered. Three or four years ago I pointed out that, in my judgment, as far as I could gather from the books I had studied on the subject, the system carried on by the British Government in attempting to put down the Slave Trade by the employment of British cruisers on the African Coast, instead of being the means of suppressing that trade, had only had the effect of increasing and intensifying it. On that occasion I did not receive the support of a single Member of the Committee of this House, and the consequence has been that I have not brought the subject forward since. It is now more than 15 years since Dr. Schweinfurth, one of the greatest travellers in the slave districts of Africa, pointed out that the efficiency of the British cruisers in the Red Sea for the suppression of the Slave Trade was absolutely illusory; and he also gave full details of the sufferings to which the slaves were subjected, and the methods by which they were captured by the Arab traders. The result of his information was that, so far from our diminishing the evils inflicted on the slaves, for every slave brought down to the coast and captured by the British cruisers probably two or three slaves were captured from the interior of Africa to supply the places of those who were thus released. It is manifest that there are only two ways of interfering with the Slave Trade in a manner likely to prove effectual in diminishing the sufferings the slaves have now to undergo. In the first place, you must stop the supplies of these slaves at the sources whence they are obtained, or, in the next place, you must stop the bringing down of the men *en route*; because so long as you have an increased demand for slaves, and as long as the Arab traders have an interior field to operate on in providing the supply, the only result of our interference in the conveyance of those poor creatures from the coast will be that for every slave we intercept and set at liberty the Arab traders will obtain an increased number to supply the loss. Probably, for every slave delivered in the slave markets of Arabia, as many as 10, or probably 15, will be killed or destroyed on their way down from the interior; and therefore it seems useless to expect that we can suppress this infamous trade by dealing with it in the way we have adopted. It is a perfectly illusory and useless method, and I go further, and say it is mischievous. You have three or four cruisers in the Red Sea, and there is a considerable loss of life, even to British sailors. It is a most unhealthy region in which to keep British sailors. As a result of the presence of these cruisers, you have nothing but an increased loss of life and additional suffering to the negroes of Central Africa. It has been said by the hon. Gentleman opposite that he would desire to see the Government support a movement by the German and other Governments in favour of stopping the Slave Trade. In my judgment, the first step towards concerted action is to get rid of the sham, and let the public know that no honest attempt has been made to put down the trade. After 15 or 20 years in the Red Sea, you have not made the smallest impression on the trade, nor saved the life of a single negro. It would be a good thing to drop this Vote out of the Estimates, on the general principle that it is wrong to waste money. But there is the higher object of bringing home to the public of England that no serious and earnest effort has been made to put a stop to this trade, which is a blot and disgrace to the whole of the civilised world. Nothing is more certain than that a fourth of the cost lavished on useless wars would have sufficed to stamp out this trade in six months. Eastern Africa is in a peculiar position. The hon. Member is not prepared to put military posts into the interior of Africa. I do not suppose he is, because Prince Bismarck would not allow it. We are informed that we have got one of the greatest Foreign Ministers England ever possessed. I do not pretend to be very well versed in foreign affairs; but all I know is that, wherever you go in Africa and Australia, the people living there appear to think that we cannot move without the sanction of Germany. In Samoa it was so, and it was the same thing in New Guinea. And if England stands by in Eastern Africa, it is that by some mysterious bargain, the details of which we do not know, that part of Africa is under the control of Prince Bismarck, in pursuance of what is known in America as the "Deal." I hope the German people will make a better use of their power than the English people have done, and that they will deal with this trade, having the English people, if it be necessary, to assist them in their efforts. Still, I think, it would be the best way to open the eyes of the people of England to the truth of this question, if this Vote were removed from the Estimates, letting them know frankly that the day has gone by for their cruisers in the Red Sea. If you do that, you will take a great step towards inducing the English people to take up this question in a really earnest manner.

*(5.22.) THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Sir, I will offer some considerations to the House, why it is undesirable at this moment to enter upon an extended debate of the policy of suppressing the Slave Trade, or upon the further measures which may be thought desirable to give effect to that object. The Committee will remember that there is at this moment a Conference of nearly all the Powers of the world sitting at Brussels, on the initiation of Her Majesty's Government, to consider this very matter. Every possible suggestion that experience can suggest for more effectively suppressing this devastating trade is now being considered by selected experts from all the nations of the world. Every practicable suggestion will be considered with the greatest possible advantage. The suggestion of my hon. Friend below the Gangway must occur to persons who are at all conversant with the history, and especially the recent history, of the Slave Trade. It must be evident that you only palliate, if in some respects you do not aggravate, the horrors of the Slave Trade if you merely cut it down on the seaboard, leaving almost untouched the area of its origin. Our information has brought closely to our knowledge the manner in which the slaves are brought to the East Coast of Africa. They are used as porters for the conveyance of valuable merchandise for export. It is only the miserable remnants of the caravans, that have traversed hundreds of miles to the seaboard, who, if opportunity offers, are put on board some vessel and transported to the markets of Zanzibar and different parts of Asia. The hon. Member has said that we do no good by our operations to put down the maritime Slave Trade;

but it is a fact that since the British and German squadrons have been operating in these seas the Slave Trade has there ceased. Great efforts have been made, for a long series of years, by Her Majesty's Navy to put down the Slave Trade, but I have always admitted that we do not strike the evil at its roots in employing these measures. But I cannot, on that ground, agree that those measures ought to be abandoned ; but, undoubtedly, it is a reason why we ought to take some further measures, if possible, to save the remnant of the people who, at this moment, are being so extensively scourged and destroyed by this iniquitous trade that thousands of square miles of territory are absolutely devastated. As to the establishment of military Ports on the Lakes, the Committee will at once recognise the the difficulty of establishing them without a base, while for their relief you might be led into undertaking military expeditions of unknown magnitude. It is exactly to check the progress of the Slave Trade in Africa, by the adoption of measures additional to those in use on the seaboard, that this Conference in Brussels is sitting. Therefore, I venture to think Her Majesty's Government, in promoting that Conference, have taken the best means of ascertaining how to deal with this trade, seeing that, hitherto, the efforts of this country have been applied to only a small part of Africa. The hon. Member asked what Powers permitted the Slave Trade to be carried on. I know of none. The French have consistently refused to allow their ships to be searched by the ships of other nations, but, in recent years, the extensive granting of licences by agents abroad have been stopped, the abuse has been rectified, and French vessels are not now sailing, under cover of the French flag, to prosecute the Slave Trade. I do not think there are any other remarks on the general question which I need offer to the Committee. I venture to think the Committee will not draw back from the work this country has for many years pursued, for which it has made such great sacrifices, and in which it is now honourably engaged in concert with the other nations of Europe.

(5.32.) Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I should have thought that some discussion on this Vote would have tended to strengthen the hands of the Government. I am bound to say I have long thought that our present methods of suppressing the Slave Trade on the East Coast of Africa have done very little good. On the West Coast we were extremely successful, but on the East Coast the circumstances are quite different. The vessels employed in the trade are small, and can easily escape the observation of our cruisers. I do not desire to get rid of the cruisers, however, because, although I do not think they do much good, I should hardly like to say that they do none. The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary put his hand on the sore when he said that the large amount of the Slave Trade arose from the necessity of carrying ivory to the coast. If roads were made for the traders you would get rid of a great deal of the Slave Trade in East Africa. In the last few years part of Africa has been very much opened up, and the result is that what I may call the centre of gravity of the Slave Trade has been removed very much to the north—to the neighbourhood of the Victoria Nyanza. I do not think there would be any serious difficulty in establishing military forts on the Lakes, but I do not think that would be the true way of suppressing the trade. I believe the true way is to encourage the opening out of the country, and to try and get animals of some sort that will do the work of transport more cheaply than the slaves do it. No doubt, in both the German and British spheres of influence, a great step has been made in stopping the trade by opening up the country.

(5.36.) Sir G. CAMPBELL: I quite accept the view of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs that we cannot go into this most difficult question of the Slave Trade at a time when a Conference is sitting on the subject. I may say, however, I do not think the establishment of military forts in the interior of Africa is so easy a thing as the hon. Member seems to think, and I consider that the only alternative to our present policy is the occupation of large tracts of country. I confess I notice with some regret that, in the course of his travels, the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. J. Dillon) seems to have inherited a large amount of Jingoism, as was evidenced by his remarks respecting the Germans in East Africa. I wish to call attention, however, to a more practical subject in connection with this Vote. £16,000 out of the £26,000 seem to me to have no connection with slavery whatever. It is the amount of a subsidy to the British India Steam Navigation Company for a mail service to Zanzibar. I do not know why this is put in the Slave Vote, because it certainly has no direct connection whatever with the Slave Trade. It seems, however, that it is a very easy way of getting the item through by putting it under the Slave Vote. The suppression of the Slave Trade is an object which will justify almost anything in the eyes of the people of this country. I observe that the British India Steam Navigation Company is very intimately connected with the East African Company, and it seems to me that this item in the Vote is something very like an indirect subsidy to the East African Company. I want to understand why the amount appears in this Vote, and what is the nature of the subsidy. I also want to know why they contracted so much with the British India Steam Navigation Company for service on the East Coast of Africa. I want to know if the East African Company, or any other Companies, are to pay anything towards this Contract Service?

*(5.41.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The reason the subsidy paid to this Company appears under this Vote is, because it has, for many years, so appeared. I admit the justice of the hon. Member's criticism, and I suppose the explanation is that when the contract was made many years ago it was found that the mail service was of great assistance in keeping up regular communications, and thereby checking the Slave Trade. The contract has been presented to the House, and an explanation of it will soon be made, when hon. Members will have an opportunity of discussing it. The companies referred to do not contribute to the subsidy.

*(5.43.) SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): The hon. and gallant Gentleman behind me pointed out the great benefit of communications by land for the putting down of the Slave Trade. When this subsidy was first granted there was no question whatever of opening up Africa by land, but since that time we have made a considerable advance, and we know now that there is a fair prospect, through the "spheres of influence" and the German and English Companies, of opening up Africa by land. Formerly there was no regular communication with Zanzibar at all, and one of the recommendations of the Committee, which sat nearly 15 years ago—and which I had the honour of serving on—was that the best way of putting down the Slave Trade was by encouraging legitimate commerce, and that commerce along that coast would be encouraged if a subsidy were granted to a steamship company, so that there might be a regular communication. This was unanimously agreed to, and thought a very practical measure at that time. Whether it may be necessary any longer I cannot say. I suppose the contract is entered into for a considerable time, and I can conceive it possible that when it comes to an end it may be advisable to reconsider its continuance.

*(5.46.) SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary that the present moment is inopportune for the discussion of any general measures for the suppression of the Slave Trade, as the Conference is still sitting. But since such a strong expression of opinion on the subject has been put forward by the hon. Member for East Mayo, and the point has also been dwelt on by other hon. Members, I do think it is only right that those who think differently should put forward an equally strong expression of opinion. I do not at all agree with the hon. Member that no honest attempt has been made by this country to suppress the Slave Trade on the East Coast of Africa and in the Red Sea. I think a considerable amount of success has attended our efforts, and I am quite certain of this, that public opinion in this country will never sanction—at least not in our time—the course of policy recommended by the hon. Member. that of abandoning these attempts to put down the Slave Trade. At the same time, I am free to confess that the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Preston possibly does go a little too far. The establishment of military posts up in the interior of Africa would, clearly, involve this country in very serious responsibilities, to an extent to which we cannot quite see the conclusion. I think our true policy in this matter is to support the pioneers of civilisation in Africa—to give our moral support to the Mis-

sionaries, and the commercial companies and traders who venture into these regions. It may occasionally be necessary for that moral support to take the form of military expeditions. It always, of course, involves naval operations. Beyond that I do not think the public would support the Government in going. But I am quite certain that public opinion would not support any abandonment of the measures now taken.

(5.47.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The Financial Secretary to the Treasury seems to me to put the cart before the horse, for he proposes that we should first vote the money and then take into consideration the terms of the contract. I apprehend that the contract is a new one, under fresh terms, for I see that last year we voted £6,870, with a Supplementary Vote of £3,000, and that this year we are to vote £16,000. I do hope that after, the statement of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury that this contract only appears under the Slave Trade Vote because it always has done so, in another year we shall not find these Estimates arranged in such a form as to deceive the country, making it believe that this money is spent in the suppression of the Slave Trade, whereas it is expended for other purposes. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said it was undesirable that we should enter into a discussion of this Vote at the present moment. Well, I never yet heard any proposal to enter into a debate on any Estimate which was not met by the Minister in charge of the Estimate explaining that under other circumstances the debate would be desirable and legitimate, but that under present circumstances it was neither the one nor the other. Why does the right hon. Gentleman say it is undesirable to discuss this matter now? It is because there is at the present moment a Conference sitting on he question. I should have thought the fact that a Conference is now sitting at Brussels on the subject of the Slave Trade would make the present discussion particularly appropriate, as Ministers would desire to receive suggestions from Members for the assistance of the Conference. I do not approve of the suggestion to establish forts in Africa, as that course has always been followed by the annexation of the surrounding country, and I have always thought that King Theodore explained the thing pretty clearly when he said—

> "I understand your civilised countries. You send to us first your missionaries, then consuls to look after the missionaries, and then armies to look after your consuls—and what becomes of the poor African?"

I do not think anything would be gained, so far as the Africans are concerned, by the establishment of these forts. The specific complaint is that money is wasted by the attempt to put down slavery in the Red Sea. When we first went to Suakin the plea was—though we have changed it a dozen times since—that it was necessary to undertake the expedition in order to suppress the transport of slaves from Africa to Arabia. We expended millions then, and have expended millions since, but all to no purpose, so far as I can make out. Where on earth do the slaves go to? A certain number come down to the coast as porters, and then go back. We utilise their labour. The fact that Stanley, who was sent to relieve Emin Pasha, employed many slaves in his expedition makes it difficult for the people of Africa to believe that we really wish to put a stop to the Slave Trade. If we did away with the slave markets in Turkey, Asia Minor, Arabia, and Egypt, there would be no profit left for those who took the slaves across the Red Sea. It is impossible to prevent slaves from being transported across, seeing that it is not like a wide ocean which takes days or weeks to cross. We are ready to spend money for the suppression of the Slave Trade, but we want to spend it to the best advantage. It is impossible to prevent it by the measures we at present adopt, and we ought to consider whether there are not some practical means of laying out our money to better advantage than we do at present. The system we now have in practice, it seems to me, has proved, to all intents and purposes, almost entirely ineffectual for suppressing the trade in slaves across the Red Sea.

*(5.50.) MR. J. MACLEAN (Oldham): I was glad to learn from the statement of the Secretary to the Treasury that if we pass this Vote to-day we shall have another opportunity of discussing the enlarged expenditure that is to be granted for the Mail Service of the British Indian

Company. My recollection is that this Service was first suggested by Sir Bartle Frere, when he went on a Mission to Zanzibar. He said it would be one of the most effectual means of substituting legitimate commerce for the illegitimate commerce known as the Slave Trade. The extension of this expenditure raises a serious question of policy, because it is pretty well-known that the leading men of the British Indian Company are also the principal directors of the East African Company that has obtained the Charter giving it such large powers in Eastern Africa. I think the House ought to know a good deal more about the working of these Chartered Companies, and the powers they possess, and the extent to which this House is prepared to back them up, than we have yet had an opportunity of learning. We know there is not only the East African Company, but the South African Company, who have obtained a Charter. Are these Companies formed merely for the purpose of putting down the Slave Trade, or to what extent do their powers go? The hon. Member for Preston has suggested that England should establish a chain of military posts from Zanzibar right up to the Nile, but I do not think that a country which a very few years ago abandoned Khartoum would be likely to approve a policy of that kind. But it seems to me that if these chartered companies are allowed to go on with their operations we may be committed to serious responsibilities in both East and South Africa before we realise fairly what we are doing. It is the tendency of this country to commit these large powers to these companies, in order to avoid fixing responsibility on the Government itself, and having to undergo the ordeal of criticism in this House. But we know from the history of our difficulties in the past how conflicts have arisen.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is getting astray very wide of the Vote.

*MR. J. MACLEAN: I will stray no further, Sir, and was only led so far by remarks made in debate. I will only say that I think it is desirable we should clearly understand what powers these companies possess, and the position in which they may ultimately land this country.

*(6.2.) SIR R. TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): In a very few words I venture to express an earnest hope that the Government will not relax their efforts in the slightest degree for the suppression of the Slave Trade in the Red Sea, notwithstanding what has been said by some hon. Members opposite. It may be true that those efforts have not yet been successful in accomplishing their end, but certainly they do operate as a check upon that most inhuman traffic. I admit that the facilities for transporting slaves from Africa to Arabia causes our operations to be evaded and eluded, but we ought to do what we can, even though our exertions do not meet with all the success for which we might hope. The hon. Member for Northampton was quite right when he said it was to the markets of the Slave Trade that we must look. The market in Egypt, I am glad to say, is rapidly closing, and I trust that that at Constantinople will soon be closed. But there is one very prominent market which, I am afraid, will be more difficult to deal with, namely, Jeddah, which is the seaport in the Red Sea for Mecca, and the point at which pilgrims from India debark when they go to Mecca. However, we have a Consul at Jeddah and therefore we have some means of supervision and of acquiring knowledge as to the progress of the Slave Trade in that market. I remember once taking part in the development of that Consulate. Still, I must remind the House that too much must not be expected from any supervision of that kind by us. For the jurisdiction there is not ours, but is nominally Turkish. If we had the authority there we might strike a blow at the Arabian. Still, we may exercise influence. If we make the most of our opportunities we may do something, at all events, to bring the moral influence of this country, of Europe, and of the world, to bear on this market, which really forms a basis for a part of this dreadful trade.

(6.5.) MR. PICTON: The hon. Baronet has hardly done justice to the remarks of the hon. Member (Mr. Dillon), who urged that the money spent on this object is to a great extent wasted, because it is not supplemented by efforts to prevent the Slave Trade on land. It is not possible to do this by a chain of forts across the country; but this I do say, that no procession of slaves, whether used as porters or otherwise, should be allowed without interference to pass any British post or through any district where we hold influence.

*(6.6.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): May I ask whether the East Africa Company is not identical with the British India Company carrying mails to Zanzibar? Also I wish to know is not the Company in the habit of using forced labour for the carriage of goods into the interior from the coast? I believe it is intended that the East Africa Company shall make a railway into the interior, and that is all very well; but we have it on record that Mr. Stanley's expedition was supported by slave porters, and I should like to know whether this Company to whom we are voting this sum follows that practice—hiring slave labour?

*(6.8.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: The point to which the hon. Baronet referred is a very important one. In a place where all, or nearly all, servants are in the position of slaves, and slave labour is the only labour to be got, it is a very difficult point to deal with, but I believe that everything is done to see that those employed do get fair wages for their work, and strict regulations have been laid down by which that object was secured. But the East Africa Company has done a very great deal to establish free labour in their sphere of influence, and have made great sacrifices in obtaining the freedom of large numbers of slaves who have taken refuge in their stations, or in mission stations; they have always relieved them from the necessity of returning to their masters. More than that, they have enabled many slaves engaged in the labour to obtain their freedom, and it has been their main object to establish free labour in their sphere of influence to a great extent, and thus gradually to substitute it for the services of slaves. With regard to what has been said as to the identity of the British India Company and the East Africa Company, it is quite a mistake to suppose that they are the same; though they have the same Chairman, the Board of Directors and shareholders are different.

(6.12.) MR. DILLON: From whom are these slaves purchased? I have always understood that the British Government refuse any recognition to slavery, but if this East Africa Company has been in the habit of giving a price for the purchase of a slave's freedom, that is an evil practice that should cease at once, for it really is an encouragement to Slave Trade.

*(6.15.) SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I stated the reverse of what the hon. Member for East Mayo has alleged. I did not say that the company purchased slaves, but only that a sum was advanced to them after their liberation. It must be remembered, moreover, that this is in foreign territory, and that it is impossible for the British Government to abolish slavery there by a stroke of the pen. These territories are under the dominion of the Sultan of Zanzibar, or of native chiefs, and we cannot abolish slavery which throughout nearly the whole Continent is habitual. What I said was that the Company used their utmost efforts to promote free labour, and took opportunity to obtain the freedom of slaves, allowing these last to work out a certain portion of the money paid by them in compensation.

(6.18.) MR. DILLON: I did not mean to suggest that slaves were purchased for employment as slaves by the company, but I do consider it is highly objectionable that English money should, though indirectly, act as an encouragement to the Slave Trade. The motive may be a good one, but still the action of the company does to a degree encourage the Trade.

*(6.20.) SIR J. SWINBURNE: After what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman I do not think we ought to allow the Vote to pass without an assurance that the charter of these companies shall be withdrawn unless they give an undertaking not to use forced labour.

THE CHAIRMAN: Chartered Companies do not come within this Vote at all.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE: I may say that we have no assurance that this East Africa Company does not employ slave labour or forced labour, and I do not think we ought to pass this Vote without such an assurance.

*(6.21.) MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): We are told that the slaves have their freedom purchased, and that a bar-

gain is made with them as to working out a part of the cost of that freedom; now I want to know, while that is being worked out, who is the owner of a slave in this position? The more we look into this subject the more unsatisfactory it appears. It is difficult to move a reduction of this Vote, because one is so liable to be misunderstood. I am sure we all agree in voting money for the suppression of the Slave Trade; but, as the hon. Member for Mayo has said, the system is so bad that I very much doubt if our action in the Red Sea does not cause more suffering than we prevent.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I should like to have from the Under Secretary some assurance that Her Majesty's Government will really put pressure upon the Sublime Porte to put an end to that great scandal, the slave market at Jeddah. The Turkish Empire is tolerated in Europe only by the good-will of the great Powers, and if they would bring their pressure to bear this scandal to civilisation might be put an end to. I am not sure that a bombardment of Jeddah every few years would not be more effectual than the maintenance of our cruisers in the Red Sea.

(6.25.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): In former times a good deal of slave traffic went by way of the Persian Gulf. Has the right hon. Gentleman any information on that point? As to the point just referred to, I think the Porte has not much more than nominal authority at Jeddah.

*(6.27.) SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: In reply to the hon. Member for Leicestershire, I may say the Porte two months since issued stringent orders to their officers to put down the Slave Trade by every means, and I hope these orders will be carried out successfully. In answer to the question of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, I believe that the operations of the combined squadrons on the Coast of Africa have had the effect of almost entirely stopping the over-sea transit of slaves in the Persian Gulf, and that the Trade has been reduced to the smallest proportions.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I think it my duty to move a reduction of the Vote, for it seems to me that our boasted efforts to abolish the Slave Trade are really a sham. For example, apparently, it is proposed to spend £26,000 a year on the work, but when we inquire into the matter it is found that £16,000 of this sum is given as a subsidy to a company to carry mails, and to open up a trade for its own benefit, and this company itself is in the possession of slaves who are not really working for their wages, but for their freedom. The company buy the slaves, and thereby encourage the slave-owners to produce the slaves, and then it keeps those slaves as free labourers until they have paid the purchase-money.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No; they first obtain their liberation; and then advance sums in compensation to their former owners which they, in a short time, work out.

MR. STOREY: I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say they were paid for, and that they remained with the company until they worked out their price.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Under contract. They are free labourers.

MR. STOREY: But they work out a portion of their price, therefore they are not only working for wages, but for freedom. In other words, the company buys the slaves, and thereby encourages slave-owners to produce slaves, and then the company use the slaves as what the right hon. Baronet calls free labourers until they have paid for the purchase-money. Many of us have been in districts where slaves are, and we know that for all practical purposes the position of a free labourer who has to pay for his freedom is no better than the position of a slave. I, therefore, propose to re-move the reduction of the Vote. But I was saying what a sham the whole business is after all. What sham philanthropists we are in the matter. If you subtract the £16,000, it appears we spend £10,000 ostensibly for the suppression of the Slave Trade, which extends over hundreds of miles of sea. [An hon. MEMBER: There are the men-of-war.] Yes, they are used, but the point of my observations is this: that to the £10,000 a year which we are supposed to spend for the suppression of the Slave Trade, we must add superannuation allowances which amount to nearly £2,000 a year, and which are given to those who have done nothing in the suppression of this abominable traffic. In this, and other matters, we pretend to do great things, and we are really doing little. The Under Secretary of State said he has made representations to the Porte. What nonsense it is to make representations to the Porte such as he makes. The Porte knows we really mean nothing in the matter, and the Porte takes no notice except in language and writings of our representations. Is the Porte the only sinner? The Porte has next to no influence in Arabia. It has no influence in Egypt. But we have. What is the Government doing to prevent the Slave Trade there? Last year we fought the Arabs. We killed many of them, but a certain number of them were left, and these were brought down into Egypt. We do not call them slaves, but for all practical purposes they are slaves, since they do not know their own rights. But the worst case remains. If these African companies wish to carry on their business they must employ slave labour in one form or another. If you are to trade there you must in one form or another employ labour under the conditions of the country, and, therefore, a man who hates slave-owning will not touch the dirty business in order to make money; he will leave it to other less philanthropic souls. But we encourage slavery by our charters, and assist it by our forces, and, therefore, it is a sham to spend this paltry £10,000 or £20,000 a year in the suppression of the traffic. In order to express my great dissatisfaction with the explanation which the Under Secretary has given us, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £16,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item B, £16,000, Aden and Zanzibar Steam Service Subsidy, be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(*Mr. Storey.*)

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I trust the Committee will not assent to the Vote without some further explanation on the subject of the so-called contract labour. My own impression is that what the Chartered Company did was quite justifiable. I understood that a large number of slaves took refuge with our people, their owners demanded their restitution, but the Chartered Company compromised the matter by paying a considerable sum for the liberation of the slaves. On the whole, I think that a wise proceeding. But the right hon. Gentleman has just made a most awkward and regrettable admission, namely, that the slaves are now working out the price of their freedom. The Government contributed £800 towards the liberation of these slaves, and, therefore, I hope we shall receive some further explanation.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The hon. Gentleman is mixing up two different cases. The statement I made with reference to certain fugitive slaves having their freedom granted, and making free contracts with the company on somewhat lower wages, so that in a short time the price of their freedom is supposed to be worked out, did not refer to the slaves who were found at the Mission Stations, and freed partly by the Missions, partly by the company, and partly by Her Majesty's Government.

(6.43.) MR. DILLON: I think the Committee are entitled to know what is the nature of these contracts. We are informed that a British Company, chartered by the Crown, is in the habit of purchasing slaves, and allowing them to enter into free contracts at reduced wages. What is the meaning of that? It is a most extraordinary term, and I think the members of the Committee will like to know, before the Vote is passed, what is the nature of these contracts, and how the men are compelled to observe the contracts, because if the contracts are free, the men are free to go away any time they like and get higher wages. If they are not at liberty to do this, I maintain that they are slaves. I am not entirely unacquainted with the doctrine of free contracts. We have all heard something about the sugar plantations. We were told there was no slavery at all. I know quite well that great reforms have been introduced by the Queensland Government, and that, in consequence of the exertions of public men in that country, the abuses of the system have been largely done away with. But when public attention was first directed to the matter men were engaged in the most nefarious system of slavery ever practised in the world. I have no doubt that that system was more cruel than that which now exists in Arabia, yet we were told it was a system of contract. The men were under contract to work for three years, at £6 a year, and if they did not do any work they were compelled to do it, and not allowed to go away—not allowed to enter into the service of any one else, and get higher wages. I say that if a man is not at liberty to go where he likes, and receive higher wages, or live without working, if he can, you have not free contract, but slavery. My experience has led me to believe that where you have a great commercial company carrying on this system of contract labour, the greatest possible abuse will arise. [*Cries of* "Divide."] I will not divide. Hon. Members opposite who cry "divide" belong to the same class of men who tried to shout down every discussion in reference to the atrocities committed on the sugar plantations. They talk about their British philanthropy, and yet want to rush this Vote, this preposterous and delusive Vote for the suppression of the Slave Trade, through the House without adequate discussion! I do not believe this Vote will prevent the suffering of a single negro in Africa. We are entitled to know whether a British Company is so conducting itself as to throw disgrace upon the name of this country. We have heard that there is a system of contract in force which is condemned by the public opinion of this country. We are entitled to know what are the rules and regulations of the system; but I go further, and say, that even if the system of contract labour is carried out satisfactorily, I protest against the buying of slaves for any purpose whatever.

(6.47.) **Mr. JACKSON**: I sympathise very much with the object the hon. Gentleman has in view, but let me point out that there is nothing whatever in this Vote dealing with contract labour. [**Mr. Dillon**: I did not say there was.] Two questions are mixed up. One question is that of the British Indian Steam Navigation Company, which is a mail company, and the other is the question of the East African Company. The remarks of the hon. Gentleman have no reference to any item of the Vote.

*(6.48.) **Sir J. SWINBURNE**: I have had considerable experience of the interior of South Africa, and I can inform the Committee that there is not the slightest trouble or difficulty in getting any amount of free labour there. That is proved every day by the thousands of natives who come to work at the diamond fields. Yet the Government tell us they cannot get labour in East Africa without they employ forced labour, or men who are working out their freedom under compulsory contracts. Before this Vote is passed we ought to have some assurance from the Government that they will not continue their support to this East African Company as long as the company employ forced labour.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me point out that there is nothing in the Vote connected with the East African Company.

Dr. TANNER (Cork, Co., Mid): There are two points to which I wish to call attention. When these Estimates were framed we were told we should have them in a better form than previously. The Secretary to the Treasury must be aware of the fact that in the Committee upstairs——

It being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

MENAI BRIDGE.

Copy ordered—

"Of the Report made in 1888 by Mr. Baker on the condition of the Menai Bridge."—(*Captain Verney.*)

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) (PLEURO-PNEUMONIA) [EXPENSES BILL].

Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of sums towards defraying the costs of the execution of any Act of the present Session for conferring further powers under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, 1878 to 1886, with respect to pleuro-pneumonia (Queen's Recommendation signified), upon Thursday.

EXCHEQUER BONDS (CAPE RAILWAY) (1890-91).

Copy ordered—

"Of account of Exchequer Bonds payable in the year ending the 31st day of March, 1891 unprovided for."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed [No. 141].

The House suspending its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

MOTIONS.

LABOUR AND CAPITAL.

*(9.0.) Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): It is not necessary to apologise for bringing forward the great subject of the relation of capital and labour, because we know that it is of enormous importance, and one which, at this time, especially deserves the attention of the House of Commons. We have gone through considerable agitation on the question, and it is desirable that it should be discussed less from a Party point of view than with common concern for the welfare of the country. The future of this country depends upon its trade. We are a nation of traders, and on trade we must depend for prosperity, and even for the continuance of the Empire. But trade cannot prosper in the face of foreign competition unless there is harmonious co-operation between capital and labour; and in many directions the effort of each to obtain all that it can for itself is leading to strikes and difficulties. The only way in which we can retain the position we now hold is by capital, labour, and enterprise working together in the most completely harmonious manner, and it is not pretended that our trade and commerce can extend unless these functions work in unison. At present, in many cases, they are not so working; on the contrary, they appear as enemies and opposed to one another. This may have been brought about, to a certain extent, by the changes which have been going on during the past 50 years. We have, in this country, been doing our best, by education and other means, to improve all classes; we have done our best to level up—if I may say so—from the lowest stratum of society. That is a state of things at which we must all rejoice, and we may hope that this levelling up of all classes of the community, and this placing of all classes more on a par as regards their habits and their ideas, will continue. But the natural corollary of this is that all classes, from the highest to the lowest, desire to get as much as they can for their labour. All classes now have better food, better clothing, and better housing; they all look for more comforts and luxuries, which are indeed now almost necessaries of life, and the only way in which the nation can secure a larger amount of these things is by more of them being produced. However much we may increase the wages, unless we also increase those things which wages buy, we do not improve the well-being of the people. Again, a greater production implies greater industry or greater economy in production, or, in other words, greater enterprise, a better use of capital, and the more harmonious working of capital and labour. The best results can only be obtained by capital, labour, and enterprise working in complete harmony. The question to be asked is, do labour, capital, and enterprise each receive a fair share of the earnings of the country? The claims of enterprise are often overlooked; but it is an essential part of our social progress, and it will be an evil day for this country if by any possibility a system is adopted of remunerating capital and labour and ignoring the claims of enterprise. A man who simply invests £20,000 in Consols or Colonial Bonds is not doing as much for the country as the man who embarks in commerce, and he who embarks in commerce—with all its risks — naturally expects a larger return than he who simply invests in securities. It is, therefore, essential that enterprise shall receive its fair reward. Again, I ask, does each of the three branches receive a fair share? That is a difficult and complicated question. There is one thing quite certain, and that is, that there has, during the last 40 or 50 years, been a great change in the distribution of the results of industry. Statisticians divide the community into three classes—rich, middle, and working class. From 1840 to 1877 the number of rich families is estimated to have increased from 86,000 to 222,000; the aggregate amount they hold has increased from £2,507,000,000 to £5,728,000,000, but the amount held per family has decreased from £28,800 to £25,800. The number of middle class families has increased from 780,000 to 1,824,000 families, but their holdings per family have decreased from £1,400 to £1,000. The working class have only increased from 4,300,000 families to 4,600,000 families, but their holdings have risen from £44 per family in 1840 to £86 per family in 1877. So that while the holdings of the

rich and middle classes have decreased in amount, those of the working classes proper have largely increased. No doubt if the figures for the past year were available they would show a proportionate movement in the same direction. These figures are obtained from the Returns of the Legacy and Succession Duty. Again, the same fact is shown by the number who pay Income Tax on the lowest incomes, which has risen from 39,000 in 1843 to 130,000 in 1879. According to Mr. Giffen, during the same 40 years the income from capital has increased a little over 100 per cent., from £190,000,000 to £400,000,000, and the working income paying Income Tax by about 100 per cent., from £90,000,000 to £180,000,000, while the income of the working classes has increased from £235,000,000 to £620,000,000, an increase of 163 per cent. These figures show that 30 or 40 years ago capital received too large a share of the results of industry, and the tendency has been to considerably reduce the amount which capital receives, and to place the sum so deducted to the credit of labour. I now come to the question, what does capital receive at the present time? Mr. Giffen estimates the income of the country at £1,200,000,000, and the proportion received by capital at £400,000,000, or one-third. At 4 per cent. this represents an earning income of £10,000,000,000. But this is too large an amount to be considered as earning income. Mr. Giffen puts it at £8,500,000,000, yielding an income of about £550,000,000, thus producing a return to 6¼ per cent. The capital of the country is, however, probably producing a still larger amount, which, though I do not go into this large question at the present time, may be taken as something like 7 per cent. I think we must agree that capital at the present time still continues to receive too large a share of the results of industry. I say this not from the view of one side or the other, but as a matter of purely abstract reasoning. Some hon. Members dissent from that view. Well, I have not much capital myself—I wish I had—but I should be extremely satisfied if what little I am likely to possess returned me a good deal less than 7 per cent. This calculation is entirely apart from the remuneration for labour and enterprise, which between them receive about £800,000,000 per annum. During the last 50 years labour, no doubt, has obtained great advances in wages, and what is of more importance, the same amount of money produces a larger quantity of the comforts of life; but have the advances been sufficient, considering the enormous increase in the country's capital? If it is true that capital does receive too large a share; if it is true that capital does receive nearly 7 per cent., then I think we may fairly say that 3 per cent. of that is an excessive amount; that 4 per cent. would be a fairer amount for it to receive, and if labour were to receive this 3 per cent. it would make a difference to its earnings of £150,000,000 a year, or 8s. a week per head—a very considerable addition to its present earnings. There is also no doubt that capital has an advantage in the amount it pays to taxation. While capital receives one-third of the national income it only pays about one-seventh or one-eighth of the national taxation, and the remainder has to be paid by two-thirds of the national income, the proportion so paid in excess being about 1s. per week per family throughout the country. And now I come to the question of the share of enterprise. Let me make this as clear as I can. We have a national income of £1,200,000,000; one-third of that is the result of capital; and £800,000,000 is the payment for labour and enterprise. Taking various statistics, it may be said that 300,000 persons—or 1 in 20—are entitled to remuneration for enterprise, and allowing each £10 a week—a very liberal estimate—this would give £150,000,000 between the 300,000 families, leaving £650,000,000 to be divided among the 6,200,000 working families proper. Working this out would leave an annual remuneration of £100 per head for simple labour alone, and that, as we know, is a much larger sum than labour actually receives. It is, therefore, clear that labour does not at the present time receive the amount it is entitled to. Taxation, we must all acknowledge, pinches most the lowest stratum of society, and unless a man be a most remarkable character—almost a John the Baptist living on locusts and wild honey—he pays a larger amount per £1 of income than a man who receives a larger wage.

It may, however, be said that labour is increasing largely in wealth by the amount of its accumulated savings. There is no phase of our social existence more satisfactory than this accumulation of savings by the working classes; but, after all, the total savings only amount to 400,000,000, and that total is insignificant as compared with the wages that labour is entitled to receive. Four per cent. on the total savings of the masses would only produce £16,000,000 a year, or 2 per cent. of the wage bill of the country; and, therefore, it cannot, because of those savings, be said that labour gets its proper share of the national income, nor can these savings be made a set-off against unfairness of division of the results of industry. I think, therefore, we must agree that there is something to be said for the contention that labour, as compared with capital, does not get all it is entitled to. Of course, we know that with so many persons interested in the working classes, with so many pandering to those classes with the object of getting votes, these things are becoming widely known, and are often exaggerated for class and party purposes. But what we want to get is an absolutely correct and just estimate of the relative position of labour and capital. Whether I am right or wrong in the conclusion I have drawn, that labour does not receive a fair amount, we all know that it thinks it does not receive its fair share. When trade revives there is a continual agitation for increase of wages; and I believe that the depression which often follows good years is due to the fact that trade expansion is retarded by the agitation of labour for more wages. The movements of markets are quickly made known now by means of the Press. Fifty years ago that was not so. Nowadays, if profits are seen by the condition of the markets to increase, labour at once demands a share of the increase, and threatens to strike if it does not get it. The result is an agitation, and after a certain amount of finessing between employers and employed, a strike. It is exactly similar to the positon of the governors of a steam engine. When the steam gets a little stronger the balls fly up and the steam is shut off. So, also, when trade prospers labour demands a larger and a larger share of the profits, and the agitation and uncertainty thus produced tends to shut off the steam of prosperity. We have had no end of strikes in recent times, and we find from the Returns of the Budget that a reaction has already set in that certainly these strikes have affected the country in many ways. Surely it is a most barbarous system which recognises that there is a doubt as to whether the labourer gets his full share of profit, and to allow things to go on in such a way as to bring about strikes in order to produce the results I have indicated. We know that increased prosperity leads to increased demand, and yet we take no means to secure an automatic system by which a better state of things may be introduced. I desire to press on the House this second point, that labour does really get a share of the profit, but that that share is but too often only obtained by strikes, which are a costly and suicidal policy, and which maims, if it does not kill, the goose that lays the golden eggs. I will here say a few words about strikes, but will not enter fully into the subject at this late hour. No one can doubt for a moment that strikes have increased wages in many cases, but there are enormous difficulties in getting at all the facts Mr. Bevan, whom I knew very well, took the trouble to ascertain the statistics of strikes between 1870 and 1879, and he found that during those 10 years there had been 2,352 strikes in connection with what I may practically term every conceivable trade in the United Kingdom. From the figures he obtained as the cost of those strikes, he found that 110 strikes had lasted together 577 weeks, and cost the men no less than £4,500,000. If the 2,352 strikes had cost the same rate all round the loss that would have ensued would been something enormous, not much less than £100,000,000. The statistics as to the strikes from 1880 to 1890 I have not got, but during the last two or three years strikes have been numerous. In 1888 there were 509, in three quarters of them the men gained, while in one quarter they lost. I think, if we take the strikes for the last 20 years, it will not be too much to say that the loss to the men has amounted to not less than

£200,000,000. Of course, the loss to the employers from those strikes must have been also very large indeed. I would point out that even had all those strikes been successful in raising wages, the fact remains that they could not have increased the real earnings of the people. They may have increased the money payments, but not the commodities which the people consume and which are really the wages they need. Suppose, for instance, there were a strike in the boot trade, although it might double or treble the wages, the number of boots made and used must be less, and the shoeing of the people would not be so good. The same remark applies to the agricultural labourers, if a great strike were carried out among that class, as no doubt many persons would desire, it would not increase the amount of corn grown. On the contrary, the quantity would be decreased. This being so, I ask who is it that suffers most by the loss; for although the employer must lose enormously, the greatest amount of suffering and privation must be borne by the people themselves? These being the result of strikes, namely, so large a capital loss, and so serious a reduction in the articles of comfort for the people, surely almost anything which can be devised to put a stop to them ought to be tried. Many of the Trades Unionists are determined that strikes should be done away with; and when we see that they come intermittently with every advance in the progress and development of trade, surely we ought to arrange some system by which we may divide the profits of the labourer and employer in some way that would operate less disastrously to the men themselves. I therefore submit to the House my next point as to how we may bring about some better mode. Supposing it to be true that capital only gets its fair share and that labour gets a fair share also, surely it would pay the capitalists so to remunerate labour that it should become a partner in the work done and not a rival. I think it would pay to make the interests of the capitalists and the labourer identical, so that the two might work together as friends rather than as enemies. This leads me to the great question of profit-sharing. Profit-sharing is an arrangement by which, after a fixed profit is paid on capital, the balance of the profit should be divided on some arranged system in certain proportions to the wages earned. This should apply to all labour and not to that of the artizan only. If labour now gets its full share of profit, it would, under this profit-sharing system, get nothing more; but if it does not get its full share, this is a system by which the existing irregularity and unfairness would be done away with, and an automatic method substituted in its place. It is like the case of the mercury in the thermometer. If you put the mercury in the tube and allow it full expansion the column will ascend, but if you shut it in the column the result will be that before long the tube will burst. That is what happens in the case we are discussing. No doubt sliding scales in respect of wages are a step in the right direction, while arbitration has already done something; but arbitration is an unsatisfactory and clumsy arrangement, leading to dissatisfaction on both sides. I feel convinced that where we can make the motive power of strikes, which is self-interest, available for preventing strikes, strikes may be prevented, by the very fact that the labourer will, as a matter of course, receive a fair share of the profit. The danger of strikes will be done away with, and the power now employed in a false direction would be utilised in ensuring the greater prosperity of the trade of the country, and, consequently, of the working classes. But it is said that profit-sharing is the idea of enthusiasts and Utopians. It is said to have been tried and failed. I acknowledge that any alterations of the system of wages is not an easy subject. I know that in many cases these attempts have failed and have led to disappointment; but I shall also be able to show that profit-sharing has been, and is at the present time, successfully worked. Let me take the recent case of the Gas Company. Some may say that the gas strike of last winter was a clear indication that the profit-sharing system must fail. ["Hear, hear!"] I hear hon. Members cheer that observation, but I believe that 10 year's hence the gas strike will be looked back upon as a grand new departure for labour generally, that their system will be better liked, and that under it labour will, to a large extent, be regulated. The gas proposal was that the labourers should receive for every penny by which they could reduce the price of gas 1 per cent. in their wages; and owing to that arrangement, gas having been reduced from 2s. 8d. to 2s. 3d., the men are to receive at once 5 per cent. on their earnings. That is, I say, a system that must ultimately tend to the great benefit of the workmen; and the fact remains that in spite of the pressure put on the Gas Company, that company were successful, being supported by an overwhelming number of their men, who are now deriving the benefit of the new system. Take another case, that of Messrs. Peto, which is a more disappointing case. They undertook to build a large asylum at a cost of some hundreds of thousands of pounds; and they said to their workpeople we will pay you the ordinary full rate of wages, but at the end of the job, whatever the profit may have been, those men who have been with us all the time and have had no strike shall receive a quarter of the whole profit. That, I say, was a most liberal proposal, and although, unfortunately, owing to the ignorance of those by whom the men were guided it led to difficulty and trouble, it is nevertheless a system by which the men, as well as the employers, would have been largely benefited, and which I think will ultimately prove to be successful. It is true Trades Unions have opposed profit-sharing, but I cannot think that this is a fatal objection to the proposal. Some people bestow unlimited praise on Trades Unions, and I do not say that Trades Unionism has not done a great deal for the men; it has taught them to combine and has helped to raise them in the position they hold, and has contributed to their general well-being. It has taught them to give up a monetary gratification in anticipation of future benefits, and has induced among them a spirit which tends to make men better and nobler. But, on the other hand, on many great questions there can be no doubt that Trades Unionisms have often proved to be seriously wrong. Trades Unions opposed the introduction of machinery in every possible way. ["No, no."] An hon. Member says "No, no," but he cannot have read the history of this country for the last 70 or 80 years without having recognised the fact that the Trades Unions did pursue that course. Trades Unions have also done their best to put men all upon one level, and I may say of Trades Unionists that they are the extreme Tories of the working people—the absolute Tories of trade and labour. The *raison d'être* of Trades Unions is no doubt the improvement of the condition of the working people; but when they see that the sharing of profits, although it may tend to that improvement, will have the effect of reducing their influence, it is not perhaps unreasonable that they should be found opposing what is likely to lessen their influence. But the opposition of the Trades Unions in no way affects my case or proves that profit-sharing is wrong. Indeed, it seems to me to show that profit-sharing is right, and here I will ask permission to give the House a few cases pertinent to this point. The system was begun, I believe, in France by the house of Le Claire, but I will not go into that part of the subject. I prefer to give you cases now in operation in this country. Messrs. Goodall and Suddick, stationers, of Leeds, employing 300 hands, have had profit-sharing since 1868. They pay 5 per cent. on capital, and of the balance, 18 per cent. goes to the men in proportion to their wages. They say the result is

> "Recouped by our having no trouble with our *employés*, and by our having very few changes."

Their men work 52½ hours, as against 54 and 55 in Leeds generally. Messrs. Fiddler, seed stores, Reading, employ 70 persons; had profit-sharing for seven years. After fixed amount on capital a percentage paid according to wages. They say—

> "Found it attended with the most satisfactory results, both in a pecuniary sense and as regards the better development of the different branches of the business."

Blundell, Spence & Co., Hull, employ 300 hands; colour and varnish works; profit-sharing since 1884; pay 5 per cent. on preferred shares and 6 per cent. on ordinary shares;

and of the remainder, 10 per cent. is divided among men. Thomson and Son, Huddersfield, Woollen Cloth, employ 150 hands; after 5 per cent. on capital, 10 per cent. goes to reserve; 5-10ths goes to workers according to wages; and 4-10ths for promoting business, paying anyone for any improvements in manufacture. The plans tried two years—the first year a small profit, but the second year a loss of £800, £200 of which was made up by workmen, by 8d. in the £1 on wages. The company say—

> "Improved tone of workers, showing not wages only, but feeling of justice."

Co-operative Builders, Limited. The profits are added to the capital, and go to the credit of each man, according to wages, to provide for old age. The first year's wages £83 5s. 8d., and profit, 1s. 6d. in the £1 on wages, after writing off plant, and providing for reserve fund. Coventry Gas Fitting Company, Limited. A small company with but 27 hands, but have had profit-sharing for two years. After 15 per cent is paid on capital, half the balance to men, partly in cash, and partly to the Provident Fund. First year three week's wages added, and this year will be more. Darien Press, Limited, Edinburgh; employ 70 hands, had profit-sharing for four years; after 10 per cent. on capital, half to labour and half to capital. The firm write, dated April 8, 1890—

> "We did not anticipate that its adoption would effect any sudden change in the attitude of the *employés* towards the firm; nor did it. But as time went on, and they saw their money interest in the business increasing, the output perceptibly improved. The saving thus effected, together with other economies, is now sufficient to meet the expenditure, so that, practically, the firm has lost nothing by the scheme, while it has gained largely from the improvement which has taken place in the whole tone and spirit of the workpeople. In proof of the self-supporting character of the scheme, I may mention that whereas before its adoption our dividend was at the rate of 15 per cent., it is now 14 per cent. The sum allocated half yearly represents an addition of 1s. 4d. per £1 on wages."

These seem to me thoroughly *bonâ fide* cases, which it is difficult to get over, and they prove, I think, that profit-sharing is a possible system. There is some difficulty in citing as illustrations private firms, which do not usually publish balance-sheets. But there are the cases of Messrs. Bushill & Sons, Messrs. Robinson and Brothers, of West Bromwich, and Messrs. Arrowsmith, of Bristol, and others whose profits are certified by a chartered accountant, and the *employés* accept his statement of the figures and receive their profit share of the balance. There is another experiment going on, namely, that of the New Welsh Slate Company, who employ 300 people. It is in their Articles of Association that a tenth of the amount which annually goes for dividend shall be paid to the workmen. That shows that the idea is growing, and the fact that it is growing is a substantial indication of the success of the system. Of course, there is a great number of firms who are only beginning this system in a tentative sort of way. A great number of them give a share in the profit as a bonus, or on condition that it is paid to some Friendly Society or Benevolent Fund. The motive is good; but I prefer that the workman should have the spending of his own cash, and that he should pay it into a Friendly Society if he chooses, rather than that any indirect pressure should be put upon him. Let me give one or two other instances of how this system would work where it has not yet been adopted. The Great Western Railway has a capital of £81,000,000. Of that £60,000,000 is money borrowed at a low rate of interest and bearing a fixed dividend. I propose to leave that alone. But if you take the remaining £21,000,000, upon which the success of the institution influences directly the dividend, the interest at 5 per cent. on that sum would amount to £1,050,000. The profits divided among the holders of the £21,000,000 last year was £1,742,000. The salaries and wages amounted to £2,088,000. If you adopted the system of giving a share of the profits, after paying 5 per cent., if 2 per cent. was added to them for every ½ per cent. extra demand on capital over 5 per cent. labour, wages would have 10 per cent. added to them, and the dividend on capital would be reduced from 8 to 7½ per cent. The Great Western employs between 20,000 and 30,000 people, and if each *employé* saved the company 2d. a day, or worked 2d. per day better during the year, that would mean a saving sufficient to pay half the extra amount under the profit-sharing system. It is not unreasonable to say that each man might easily save his employers 2d. per day, if he really had his heart and soul in his work. The late Mr. Tyrrell, Manager of the Great Western, told me that the company had saved enough in waste at the various stations to pay the first dividend. If such an economy could be effected in the saving of waste, is it not reasonable to suppose that 20,000 or 30,000 men interested in the success of the institution would be able to effect savings which would add not only to their employers', but to their own, profit? With the Great Northern the system would have a similar, though not so large, a result, and so with the Royal Mail Steam Ship Company, with Tramway Companies, and the London General Omnibus Company. The latter company pays nearly 10 per cent. We have heard a great deal about the condition of their *employés.* Now, if they gave their men 1 per cent. above every 5 per cent. they receive as dividend, it would be an arrangement satisfactory to all concerned. The capitalist would get 8 per cent., and 3 per cent. would be added to the wages, and that could be met by 1d. per journey extra being earned by each omnibus, an amount, I should think, it is not unreasonable to suppose, with such a stimulus, be obtained by extra energy and attention on the part of the attendants of the omnibus. Of course, under such a system, the best businesses would get the pick of the workpeople, but the unsuccessful businesses do not now have their choice of the best hands. I may fairly say that the result of this system of profit-sharing would be to induce the workman to throw life and energy into his work. I explained to a friend who was engaged in getting up a Union to advocate more wages the result of this profit-sharing system. What did he say? "Why, if that was adopted in our shop, we should then work with all our might." I venture to say if you could get that spirit to pervade working men under such a system of profit-sharing, it would lead to great results, and the loss paid as extra wages would be made up ten-fold. The result of profit-sharing is one which must benefit the workmen, because it makes them more interested in the business of their employers. What I ask for this evening is an inquiry into this system which has been adopted by a large number of firms in England and other parts of Europe. I hope the House will not think it possible that I for a moment suggest that legislation can bring this about. I strongly object to any interference by legislation. The fact remains that all schemes for putting an end to strikes have failed. We see them taking place in all directions. The proposal I make does seem to suggest some possible palliation for the existing evils, if not an actual remedy. Then, let us have the facts before us—let us have them gone into by a Committee and tabulated. The State is a large employer of labour. We have agitations for a Union, and for other purposes, amongst the servants of the Post Office and the workmen in the Royal Arsenals, and in all directions we see these things growing. Surely, under these circumstances, it is reasonable that we should look into the matter and see if something cannot be done. Local Bodies are large employers of labour as well as the State; and if we can induce them to adopt this system and get it put in force in connection with some of our Government Departments, some good result may be brought about. The present position of capital and labour seems like trying to make water flow uphill; it is like trying to mix two things which will not mix, or to melt flint into glass without flux. The flux I would suggest in the case of capital and labour is the self-interest that profit-sharing would seem to supply; and if we could establish a system by which the capitalist and the labourer would have the same interest, we should secure co-operation. In our great industries, whenever we find a mechanical obstruction or difficulty in our way, we invent some improved machine to get over it; and it does seem to me that in the matter of capital and labour when we have to acknowledge that the latter has some cause to complain, we should look around in the same way for some improved method of getting over the difficulty. Labour does not get a fair share in the operations of trade. It gets a share, no doubt, but only by strife and strikes; and it seems to me that we should endeavour to establish a system whereby, through the operation of natural laws, labour should derive an increasing share of the profits which capital and labour combine to create. I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on the various plans at present in operation by which labour, in addition to wages earned, shares in the profit of the enterprises in which it is engaged.—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

*(10.5.) SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): In seconding this Resolution, I desire to say that, though I am in entire sympathy with it and heartily sympathise with the main proposition of my hon. Friend, I cannot endorse all his arguments. I do not agree with him, for instance, in thinking that there are any possible means of establishing an automatic system which will regulate in all cases the differences arising between capital and labour. I do think, however, that it is very desirable, when the minds of both employers and employed are turning towards co-operation as a possible solution of these difficulties, that some means should be taken to obtain authentic information with regard to schemes of the kind that have been practically tried or are actually in operation. That, I understand, is the chief aim of the Mover of the Resolution, and I certainly think he has acted wisely, in the interests of capital and labour alike, by suggesting that such an inquiry should be made by a Committee and the result reported to the House. But I should have preferred the Resolution if it had read "by which labour, in addition to wages earned, shares *directly* in the profit," &c. It is a small point, but I cordially agree with the dictum of my hon. Friend when he said that the most successful firms command the best labour—which is the result of an indirect and not a direct cause. I submit that the reason the most successful firms command the best labour, is the certainty of continuous employment. I certainly think a Committee of this House a most powerful engine for collecting authentic facts. I do not in the least understand—or I would not second the Motion—my hon. Friend to do more than suggest that the House should appoint a Committee to gather information and statistics—not to go into speculative theories on this subject. There are doubtless many cases throughout the country in which the scheme of profit-sharing is being carried on quietly and unobserved, and it is of great importance that trustworthy information should be obtained and made known as to the results of the operation of the system. I may mention that, in my own constituency, there is a very interesting experiment going on at the present time. I do not mean to say that it has been long enough in existence to fall into the category of those schemes which should be examined; but I think it would be useful to other firms, who are tending in that direction, to have authentic information as to the results of schemes which have been tried with various different systems up and down the country. I do not agree with my hon. Friend—if I understood him aright—that capital is getting more than the average of profit at 7 per cent. at the present moment. I doubt if capital, *plus* brains and enterprise, can make cock-sure of even 5 per cent. profit. But I express that doubt with very great diffidence, and it really does not concern the argument for or against the Motion. But what I firmly believe is that labour very often fails to recognise the sacrifices that enterprise, which has built up the commercial reputation of the country, has to make, and the risks it has to run. In order that enterprise may secure the results at which it aims it must be backed by capital, and capital in turn relies upon friendly, secure, and co-operative relations with labour. I mention that, because the problem is so complex that it is not merely a question of capital and labour, but a question of the brains that lead capital and the brains that lead labour. The more information the working classes of the country can have with regard to actual practical matters concerning the operations of capital and labour the better it will be for them and capitalists also. When differences arise between them it is often because the

working classes, in whose common-sense I have full confidence, have not the whole of the facts before them. When, on a rise of prices, strikes take place for an immediate increase of wages, the fact is often overlooked that perhaps bad times have gone before, and that capital has had to work on at a loss simply to keep the business going. I believe, however, that if the whole matter can be approached from a business point of view by the leaders of the working classes on the one side and the capitalists on the other, with full and authentic information before them, it may be possible to arrive at a solution which will obviate many of the difficulties that now exist. There is one thing I strongly condemn in these matters—the action of the amateur conciliator, who often steps in to meddle with things he does not understand, in order to reap political capital or personal popularity. There are Labour Representatives in this House and men throughout the country who well know the difficulties of the question, and who desire to arrive at satisfactory solutions of them if possible. It is with the view, therefore, of securing information in the best and most practical way on the experiments that have been tried in co-operation between labour and capital that I second the Motion.

*(10.24.) Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I think the House owes a deep debt of gratitude to the hon. Member for North Islington for having brought this matter before the House, because it is seldom enough that we discuss Resolutions dealing with such social questions as the relations of capital and labour. We discuss many things, such as the governors and the governed in other countries, and the cultivation of asparagus in New Zealand; but discussions such as the present do not occupy much of our time. In most of the interesting matters which the hon. Member has laid before the House I concur most heartily, though with the conclusion drawn I am somewhat at variance. I cannot quite agree with the hon. Gentleman as to the remedy he would wish us to adopt. Indeed, I consider it as efficacious as would be the remedy of him who would place a piece of sticking-plaster upon a cancer. The Seconder of the Resolution spoke of those amateur conciliators who often mislead working classes and stir up strife when they seek to bring conciliation. Well, although I have often intervened in these disputes between capital and labour, I thank God that I have never intervened as a conciliator. I believe it is impossible to do anything of a conciliatory nature between capital and labour as we now see them; and I confess I am somewhat disappointed at the small scope of the matter which the hon. Gentleman has brought before the House. The hon. Member might, on this Resolution, have said something about the great misery which undoubtedly exists in almost every portion of the country and in almost every trade. He might, especially as he represents a London constituency, have pointed out that so satisfactory are the relations between capital and labour in this city that only last week we had a case of death from starvation in it—a case to which I drew attention at the time by means of a question. I must dissent from much that the hon. Gentleman said when he drew a picture of the progress which he seemed to think has taken place among the working classes during the last 40 or 50 years. I do not say that no progress has taken place; but I maintain that the condition of the far greater portion of the unskilled labourers in this country is becoming more precarious and more desperate every day, as is proved by the existence of the strikes which have been referred to; and the remedy of profit-sharing would have but an infinitesimal effect on the great labour troubles which we see on every side. I would like to deal briefly with the three elements of production touched on by the hon. Member—enterprise, capital, and labour. The power that capital gives to men of enterprise to enter into commercial speculations is not called into existence, as I read political economy, by the effort of enterprise alone. It is simply the power conferred on these men by accumulated labour, which places certain funds in their hands and enables them, for their own purposes, to embark in commercial speculations. The hon. Member deplored the fact that the relations between capital and labour were getting more strained every day. I deny now, as I have denied 50 times in this

House, and I am sure many hundreds of times outside this House, that the interests of capital and labour, as society is now constituted, can ever be identical. I am not prepared to say that capital and labour, rightly considered and apprehended, would of themselves be antagonistic. Capital is now, however, in so few hands as to create a capitalistic class, which class, from the very nature of its being, is bound to find itself in conflict with labour upon every occasion on which there is either a fall in prices or on which labour demands greater remuneration for its services. It seems to me a very common-sense and commonplace observation that if the capitalist wishes to increase his profits he has only one fund on which he can draw, and that fund is the wages of labour. It is only possible for a capitalist to make a fortune by refusing to give to labour the full share of that which labour itself produces. If he did so, he must for ever remain in the same position as when he started. On the other hand, when the great bulk of our working classes are practically deprived of property, when they have no right in the soil of their native land and when they are obliged to sell their labour, as the only thing in the wide world they have to dispose of, how can their interests be possibly identical with those of the capitalists to whom they sell their labour? It would be as reasonable to suppose that oil and vinegar would mix. It is, I believe, perfectly possible that the interests of capital and labour can be made identical, but not by means of the remedy which the hon. Member has laid before the House. The hon. Member hopes by the introduction of profit-sharing to be able to get rid of the necessity for strikes—a consummation which I, for one, am very anxious to see brought about—and he deplored the fact that Trade Unionism in its inception opposed the introduction of machinery. It is true that the Trade Unionists of 40 or 50 years ago did oppose the introduction of machinery, but they did so because they foresaw that large bodies of men would be thrown out of work, and that the benefit would go, not to the producer, but to the capitalist. Then the hon. Member drew the somewhat remarkable conclusion that it would benefit the working classes if, in these profit-sharing concerns which he sketched briefly, after a certain percentage of profit had been arrived at, further dividends were divided between the employers or shareholders and the labourers themselves. How is that percentage to be arrived at? Is a line to be drawn after the labourer, by his labour, has piled up a certain amount of profit for the employer, and are subsequent profits to be divided between the labourers and the manufacturers? Surely, Sir, there is no difference between the first 5 per cent., and the subsequent 10 or 15 per cent. If employers are willing, after 5 or 10 per cent. has been reached, to divide all the surplus, surely that is a tacit confession that the whole wage system as we know it at present is one to be condemned. I may be wrong, but I cannot think myself that 5 per cent. is a law of God. It seems to me that it would be as reasonable of the employers to commence from the beginning to divide all their profits as to begin after a certain limit has been reached. If the Committee asked for is merely to inquire into the relations between capital and labour, and into the working of the various schemes, and is not to recommend anything to the House, all I have to ask is why, in the name of fortune, he has wasted the time of the House by this discussion? With society constituted as it is at present, it is impossible for the labouring classes to hold their own against the capitalists by any co-operative or profit-sharing schemes, or any similar quack expedients. But I believe the working classes are now finding out for themselves the remedy for the evils from which they suffer. I trust them, and I think they will solve this question. Perhaps they will solve it in its beginning without the help of the House of Commons; but that they should have the help of the House of Commons is a proposition I have always laid before them in the House. The method they are adopting in every country in the world is that of obtaining a reduction of the hours of labour. They have agreed to hold demonstrations in every country in the world on the 1st of May. Though I, for one, should be glad to welcome anything that would place the relations of capital and labour on a more satisfactory footing, and ease the misery, the horrors, and the starvation to which the working classes are subjected whenever there is a strike, I rather rely on the practical commonsense of the working classes, and the determination they have expressed to attack this question by the reduction of the hours of labour rather than by means of any scheme given to them from above on a subject which, as far as I can see, does not occupy their attention in the smallest degree.

*(10.37.) Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I cannot help regretting that this discussion has taken the form of a general discussion of the various schemes supposed to be beneficial to the working man, and have not been directed with greater particularity to the Motion before the House. That Motion has hardly been alluded to by the mover himself, and has not been referred to at all by the Seconder or by the hon. Member who has just sat down. The Motion states that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into certain matters; but it does not seem to have occurred to those who have spoken that as far back as 1886 it was resolved that means should be taken for conducting such an inquiry as is now suggested, and the result was the organisation under the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division, of the Labour Statistical Department. Lord Stanley, of Preston, and the present President of the Board of Trade have assisted in extending that Department from small beginnings, but, unfortunately, the House has not placed at the disposal of that Department the funds required for making full inquiries. In fact, less money is voted for that Department than is granted in a State like Massachusetts for a similar office. Many of the difficulties that arise between employers and employed could be prevented if accurate means of information were given to both classes, and therefore I regret that the Department has not been able to extend its inquiries, and to issue fuller and more frequent Reports. I would suggest that it is not necessary to appoint any Committee to deal with this subject. All that is necessary is to give Mr. Giffen and Mr. Burnett, and those who act with them, the means of collecting all the information that is required. I do not believe it to be the case that the relations between capital and labour in this country are more strained to-day than they were 50 years ago. The Mover and Seconder of the Resolution spoke of the fair share of profit, capital, and labour ought to have respectively, and the last speaker spoke of the full share labour ought to have, but not one of them has explained what those shares ought to be or how they are to be fixed. I know that those who attempt to define in this matter will at once find themselves in considerable difficulties; but if hon. Members are afraid of difficulties they ought not to raise these questions or they may lay themselves open to the charge of pandering to the working classes without endeavouring really to help them. I do not know what view the hon. Member for Lanarkshire (Mr. Graham) takes of the full share of labour; but if he meant anything—and I will do him the justice of saying I do not think he did—his words meant the full value added to raw material by labour.

*Mr. C. GRAHAM: That was exactly what I meant.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: Quite so; and, therefore, there is no reason for interrupting me. Well, that is a phrase which can only be uttered by men who are utterly ignorant of the whole conditions of the working classes and utterly hopeless as teachers of the people. If labour takes all, who will risk skill and capital in manufacture? I never heard any more regettable phrase than that used by the hon. Member when he said that in the many cases of disputes between workers and employers in which he has interfered he has never once interfered as a conciliator. My life has been longer than that of the hon. Member, and I suppose, to my shame, I must say that I have never mixed in labour strifes except in the character of conciliator, and I have known more than one class of men in this country who have been trying to organise and some who, misled by phrases such as the hon. Member has used to-night, suffered by not following the advice of those Trades Union Leaders to whom they formerly looked for guidance. I speak on this independently. I have never attended a Congress of Trade Unions, and I doubt whether they would accept my counsel. But men who act with the hon. Member himself have interfered in labour disputes they do not understand, in industries with which they have no connection, and have led poor and hungry men to hope for redemption where redemption cannot come, and to waste the money of Trades Unions saved for good and useful purposes in maintaining a hopeless struggle. [*Cheers.*]

*Mr. C. GRAHAM: I rise to a point of order. I have no wish to interrupt the hon. Member, but I think I am bound on account of the cheer which came from the opposite Benches to vindicate John Burns and Tom Mann, the two men against whom I consider the accusations of the hon. Gentleman are levelled.

*Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr. C. GRAHAM: I am well aware of that, Sir.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: I am afraid points of order like questions of labour are beyond the immediate comprehension of the hon. Member. I did not refer to any particular men, except as being associated with the hon. Member himself. All I can say is, I am sorry when I find men addressing labourers in great meetings and telling them they can rely on violence for the redress of their wrongs. It is because I believe that the condition of the working classes in this country is enormously improved, because I believe it to be susceptible of greater improvement, because I believe in the efforts of Trades Unions, and because I believe that co-operative production and schemes of profit-sharing understood by the working men and practised by them voluntarily, may help them even in their worse misery, that I regret that we should be told that any scheme which will in any sort of fashion bring food where food is not is like putting sticking plaster on a cancer. When you irritate, when you agitate in the sense of hostility and not of conciliation, you put caustic to the cancer and make the sore intolerable. I said I would put before the House what I conceive to be the share of labour. I say that, first of all, labour must be paid a wage, because it has not the means of existing otherwise. Labour is entitled to get, first of all, for the wage earner life, and in life I include shortest hours possible with profitable enterprise, leisure, opportunities for thrift, means of providing for old age, and a fair average standard of comfort. That standard of comfort varies considerably. You cannot compare the condition of the Belgian or the Austrian coal miner; you cannot compare the condition of the textile workers in the countries of Europe where textile workers prevail with the condition of our labourers without taking into account the general surroundings. I agree that labour which labours for itself, in addition to labouring for another, is better labour, that is, more productive labour, and that it would be wise if there could be encouragement in every field of labour for some addition to the mere subsistence of life—wage—which I claim labour is first of all entitled to. I believe the more labour shares in this the better for labour. I think that schemes for co-operative production, as well as co-operative distribution, might be put before the labouring classes of this country as enterprises in which they might well engage. The hon. Member cites the cases of the big Cities of London and Liverpool, where there are very many unskilled labourers with casual employment: and he puts the condition of things there as if it were a fair example of the condition of things affecting the working classes in the country generally. It is nothing of the kind. The hon. Member reproached the Government and the Liberal Members, and the Irish Nationalist Members, because he says they have not done anything to prevent the starvation of the men whose cause he is supposed to espouse. What has the hon. Member done? Made men strike in industries by which they formerly lived.

*MR. C. GRAHAM : I did not say that at all.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

*MR. C. GRAHAM: I shall speak even if I am suspended for it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must call on the hon. Member to resume his seat.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Made strikes amongst men who live by casual employment—a shocking kind of employment at the best—because the certainty of wage-coming, if the wage be low, is better than an uncertain wage. Men who, not belonging to the particular industry, go amongst it fomenting strikes are the men who are responsible for the condition of starvation that ensues upon the strikes, and they have no right to reproach us in this House, who disagree with their action. As far as I understand Trades Unions, they have never in any case pretended to teach that strikes are what they desire. Strikes in trade are as war between nations. I am one of those who hope for peace by-and-bye—it is a long way off—and peace amongst peoples will never come when men without acquaintance with the working classes strive in moments of some political agitation—with good motives I hope, with honest hearts I believe, but with wild heads—to scatter flame instead of comfort. Strikes are bad. Why are they bad? Because the labour which is lost through them can never be recovered. If there is some gain in point of wage, the gainers by the strike, like the surviving soldiers after a battle, are called upon to "witness the maimed and wounded, the empty cupboards, the great misery, and the famished homes" as part of the consequences. I am not speaking against strikes as far as the right of the men to cancel his labour contract is concerned, but a better way for men to secure their ends, whenever it is possible, would be to apply in industry their capital which exists in savings banks, and other forms, which is thus likely to increase year by year. At present they cannot do this, because it is seldom they have one man they can trust to go in and conduct the enterprise for them more than for himself. I have great confidence, looking to the short time Trades Unions have been legal in this country, as to what they can do. I do not believe that Trades Unions are any more perfect than this House; but they are about as perfect in relation to the class they have to represent. This House is not as bad as the hon. Member calls it when he is away from it. It is not as good as it should be, but it may be made better if hon. Gentlemen will help to prevent the irritation of the sore. Now, I am not against this Committee. The more men inquire the better; but if the Committee is not to report in favour of something, there is not much use in its sitting. The machinery is already in the hands of the President of the Board of Trade. If the right hon. Gentleman is given a little more money he can make better and more exhaustive inquiries than a Committee can. It is extremely difficult to inquire into working men's organisations, before such a Committee as is proposed by the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley), but it may be well done by Mr. Burnett, who represents the majority of the organised artisans of this country. All his Reports are Reports which employers, as well as employed, may look at with gratification. The only fault I have to find with them is that they are not full enough, or sufficiently frequent. But there are other gentlemen in the Department at the disposal of the President of the Board of Trade, and from all the sources at his command the right hon. Gentleman could get all the information that is wanted. You cannot get it by means of a Select Committee alone. A considerable amount of money might be well spent in putting that information before the public. But I fear that when the hon. Member talked of "establishing" these things he meant more than mere reporting.

*MR. BARTLEY: I do not think I used the word "established." If I did so it was through inadvertence.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH : I quite accept it as a slip, though it certainly occurred in the hon. Member's speech three times. I think the President of the Board of Trade has in his hands the machinery for making such an inquiry, and a Select Committee cannot make a Continental inquiry, as the Department can, through Consular agents. I am glad that labour questions are raised for discussion in this House ; but it would be a bad thing if the impression were to go forth to the country, as it has gone forth in some parts of the world, that it is possible for any rapid change in the relations between capital and labour to take place—for any improvement which could be measured by days, weeks, or months to be effected in the condition of any one class. The improvement in this country has been marvellous. The dwellings of the great mass of workers, the education and the general tone of the people, are, as compared with the time when I was a lad, something of which every inhabitant of this Kingdom may be proud. Except in regard to the agricultural population, we are in advance of every country in Europe in respect of the standard of comfort for the workmen and the conditions of work. Trade Unions have done much ; but it has only been within the last 15 or 20 years that they have had the opportunity of acting with legal means. I was astounded—or I should have been but for the speaker—to hear the doctrine enunciated that machinery has injured the workmen of this country. It has done nothing of the sort.

*Mr. C. GRAHAM : I said that machinery, through the action of the capitalist class, had been made rather a wage-saving appliance than a labour-saving appliance.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH : That is precisely what is not true. It is incapable of proof. The hon. Member should read a Report emanating from the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade in relation to the textile industries, and see the hours worked and the wages earned now as compared with the statistics of 50 years ago. The hon. Member will see that in the industries where machinery has multiplied more than in any others the number of workers has increased, the standard of comfort has increased, and the condition of misery and squalor in which the workers lived 50 years ago has quite changed. The hon. Member does not know of yesterday ; but he has no right to speak as if to-day is worse without that knowledge. Without machinery the bulk of the savings to which the hon. Member for North Islington has referred would not have existed for the working classes.

*Mr. C. GRAHAM interposed a remark.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH : I am opposed to constant interruptions. I regret that it is not possible to discuss a question of this kind with each speaker relying merely on the solidity of his argument. If it is only possible to meet here what I hope has some claim to argument by constant interruption, what is to be said of the gatherings outside Parliament for dealing with questions between employer and employed ? It is the duty of those who obtain influence with the people to err, if they err at all, on the side of keeping the people peaceful instead of making them mischievous. The people hold the vote to elect Representatives, and there are men near me who represent labour, and who, against the most powerful capitalists in the world, have won what they think labour is entitled to. I agree that labour wins too little and bears too much, and the House might do much in redressing the incidence of taxation pressing now upon labour. But that is not the subject before the House ; and I would submit that while there is no reason against the appointment of a Committee, there is a better and more impartial means of getting the same information now at the disposition of the Government if the House would only vote a few hundred pounds—a sum probably less than the cost of witnesses before a Committee.

*Mr. C. GRAHAM : I ask leave to make a personal explanation ; it is the first time I have done so. I will not follow the hon. Member for Northampton in his personal remarks. I was discussing principles, but the hon.

Member has turned aside to discuss persons. It is, however, rather a serious allegation against a Member of the House of Commons to accuse him of having incited to violence. I have spoken at many meetings where considerable excitement has been exhibited; but I have never incited to violence, because I knew that violence would recoil on the heads of the working classes, against whom all society, as I conceive it, is a vast organised conspiracy. I have never incited to violence.

An hon. MEMBER: Trafalgar Square?

*MR. C. GRAHAM: I have never incited to violence, because I believe that it would do the working classes no good. But the very moment that the power was in their hands and can be effectively used without injury to themselves, I should then incite to violence.

*(11.10.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I do not think the hon. Member has improved his position by his explanation. I am not going into the general question—I rise only with a view to respond to the appeal which has been addressed to me as President of the Board of Trade by the hon. Member for Northampton. I confess I am not as sanguine with regard to the advantages to be derived from profit-sharing as my hon. Friend. I think the system is open to a great many objections. Profit-sharing is all very well from a philanthropic point of view; but I fail to see why, if it be attempted to be practised from a business point of view, the employed should not share the losses as well as the profits; and I do not believe that workmen generally either could or would share the loss of a bad year. If an average, including profits and losses, is to be taken over a number of years, I fear the profits to be divided would be very much less than my hon. Friend supposes. I quite admit, however, that anyone who places before us an idea from which he may hope to bring about confidence rather than distrust among employers and employed must command our sympathies. The profit-sharing of this country is not at all confined to the profit-sharing borrowed from France. There is another kind, namely, that due to co-operative production; and when the hon. Member for Northampton says that the Board of Trade might have done more in this matter, I would venture to refer him to two excellent Reports by Mr. Burnett of the proceedings of the Co-operative Congress of 1888 and 1889, where hon. Members will find a Resolution, passed after considerable debate by that Congress, affirming their great desire for the extension of the system of profit-sharing on the basis of co-operative production. What I would suggest with reference to the actual Motion before us is this—I will endeavour, with the machinery at my disposal at the Board of Trade, to collect all the information that can be collected with regard to this system of profit-sharing by co-operative production or otherwise in France and England, and to have that information embodied in a readable Report to be then laid before Parliament. I submit that that would be the first and most necessary step in the direction which my hon. Friend contemplates, for I do not suppose that he looks to enforcing the profit-sharing system by means of legislation. What he wants is to have the facts laid before the country; and when the facts are before the country it would be open to him or any other Member to propose that they should be considered by a Committee of this House. I do not suggest that the Board of Trade should sift these facts and state opinions upon them. What I would do is, as I have said, to collect the information in a readable shape; and I hope with that understanding my hon. Friend will not press the Motion to a Division.

(11.15.) MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): If the hon. Member for Islington goes to a Division I shall certainly not vote against the Motion, but I do not know that it would be worth while to vote for it. There is no doubt that all the information the hon. Member asks for he might have had in the ordinary way, by moving for a Return; but then the House would have been under the great disadvantage that it would not have heard the hon. Member's speech. I am informed that there is in France a Department for collecting information of this kind from all parts of the world, so that a communication from the Foreign Office might at once place the Board of Trade in possession of an enormous amount of information on the subject of profit-sharing. If the system is to exist at all it must rest upon a basis of sound business principles, not on principles of philanthropy. I regret that up to the present we have not heard on this question the voice of any of my Colleagues in the House who are supposed specially to represent the great industries of the country. I could not gather from the speech of the hon. Member for North Islington whether he has any definite plan in his mind with regard to profit-sharing. The most definite part of the hon. Member's speech was his severe condemnation of trade unions. As to some of the other speeches, I might say, with my hon. Friend near me, "Thank God the average British working man is wiser than some of the would-be friends who advocate his cause." The hon. Member for North Islington gave us some extraordinary figures, supplied by Mr. Bevan, as to the cost of strikes, and the impossibility of the game adequately repaying the outlay consequent upon strikes.

*Mr. BARTLEY: I merely stated what that Authority had laid down as the cost to the labourer—the amount of loss in wages—and I then went on to say that that loss was absolutely gone.

Mr. BROADHURST: The hon. Gentleman should not descend to any particulars as to the basis on which Mr. Bevan framed his calculation. I have seen many calculations going to prove that strikes were altogether a mistake—a costly, a useless, and a profitless proceeding on the part of the labourer, but most of the calculations have been based upon false foundations, and, so far as we are in possession of information to the contrary, the calculations of Mr. Bevan's are of that nature. The Trades Unions have conducted great strikes, and in the past they found enemies and opponents in every class of society. The Press and the Pulpit denounced them, Parliament opposed and denounced them, and Trades Unions had no means of enforcing attention to their claims except by the extreme process of striking, or by conduct which led to lock out. I contend that the progress of peoples from the condition of slavery to that of freedom cannot be counted by pounds, shillings, and pence. What we have to bear in mind is that 50 years ago labour was comparatively degraded in character and powerless as regards its action. What is it that has secured for labour its present position? It has been the action of the Trades Unions and the exercise of the right to strike for better wages and for shorter hours. The exercise of that right has resulted in one great and everlasting gain, and in a great moral and educational and physical gain to the nation at large. Through the means of Trades Unions £8,250,000 has been spent in benevolent purposes. What does that mean? It means that by the aid of Trades Unions the working classes of the country have created an institution of self reliance unexampled in their time in any other nation in Europe. The hon. Member for North Islington said that Trades Unions opposed the introduction of machinery. Yes; the working classes who belonged to Trades Unions 70 years ago were more ignorant than the Trades Unionists of to-day are, but who were responsible for that ignorance? Was it not Parliament and the Cabinet, that were supposed to watch over the spiritual and intellectual welfare of the people? If the hon. Member will only continue his studies on the labour question, he will grow much wiser than he is to-night. He has made a great attack upon Trades Unions, about which he knows little or nothing. It is not true to say that Trades Unions opposed machinery. Here and there, in different centres and branches of industry, they may have done so. But, Sir, the House of Lords opposed machinery. The labourers of the country, therefore, were not more ignorant than the House of Lords, and there were men in the House of Commons, at that time, who did not look with favour on the great development of steam power and steam means of locomotion. It is altogether uncalled for, and unworthy, to go back 70 years ago for an illustration of this kind. We have progressed as rapidly in intelligence, I hope, as any other institution—as Parliament, the Church, the Law, or any other great collection of intellectual people in this country. The hon. Member did not give us a single instance of opposition on the part of Trades Unions to machinery, or of opposition on their part to profit-sharing.

An hon. MEMBER: Gas strikes.

MR. BROADHURST: I submit that the gas strikes had nothing at all to do with this matter; and it is not fair thus to cite the case of the gas stokers as against the general opinion of the Trades Unions of this country. The hon. Gentleman referred to the scheme put forward by Messrs. Peto; and commented on the wickedness of the Trades Unions in opposing it, but my recollection of that scheme was that it was ill-considered and almost unworkable, and one that no experienced Trade Unionist could, without many reservations and amendments, recommend his fellows to adopt. It is altogether unfair, then, for the hon. Member to attack Trades Unions on the ground of opposition to these schemes without giving the grounds of opposition. I think the debate can not do much harm, but neither will it do much good. The offer made by the President of the Board of Trade embodies a far more practicable scheme for obtaining sound information than could be obtained by the institution of a Select Committee, such as is proposed by the hon. Member for North Islington.

(11.35.) MR. BURT (Morpeth): I do not rise with the intention of prolonging the Debate, because I believe that a great many Members are anxious to proceed with the discussion of another subject. I think, however, that this has been a valuable discussion. I, for one, have felt for long that there will be no solution to the labour problem except through some system of profit-sharing between capital and labour. I make no complaint of the references of the hon. Member to Trade Unions, except that his remarks are themselves open to some criticism; but with regard to Trade Unions generally, they have never been hostile to profit-sharing. Throughout the country they are entirely in sympathy with the principle of co-operation, and I believe that Trade Unions will heartily welcome any practical scheme of co-partnership or division of profits. I think, however, the object the hon. Member has in view would be gained by the generous manner in which the President of the Board of Trade has met the proposal, and I hope, therefore, that the hon. Member will not put the House to the trouble of a Division.

*(11.38.) MR. BARTLEY: I most candidly accept the offer made by the President of the Board of Trade. All I wish to have is information; and I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that when we get that information we shall be in a much better position than we are at present. Under the circumstances, I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LOCAL VETO) (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 14.)

(RESOLUTION OF 26TH MARCH.)

*(11.41.) MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I think the House pretty well understands the object of the Resolution which I am about to move. When this Bill was under discussion on March 26 a misapprehension arose. The Closure was moved at half-past 5, after this came the Division on the Bill, and while everyone was going out an Amendment which had scarcely been spoken to at all was passed by the House. It has been thought that this might apply to other Bills besides the one under discussion, and to make the ground quite clear and to avoid doubt

I think it would be better to pass this Resolution. I believe it will meet with the unanimous assent of the House.

(11.42.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): I beg to second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland having informed the House that the Local Government Bill for Ireland to be introduced this Session, as intimated in Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, will be upon similar lines to the Acts passed for England and Scotland, and will not contain any provisions giving Local Authorities powers to control the times during which exciseable liquors are sold in Ireland, or any such regulations, this House is of opinion that there is nothing to prevent it from proceeding further with legislation in relation to the control and regulation of the trade of excisable liquors in Ireland, any previous Resolution of the House to the contrary notwithstanding."—(*Mr. Lea.*)

(11.43.) MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): I object to the Motion of the hon. Gentleman opposite on two grounds, In the first place, I believe the adoption of the Motion of the hon. Gentleman would be an act of self-stultification; and, in the second place, I believe it would be an unfair departure from the ordinary practice of the House. It appears to me that the contingency which the hon. Member for Tipperary had in view when he carried his Amendment is now before us. It is true that the Government are not going to bring in a Local Government Bill for Ireland; but the First Lord of the Treasury has stated that the new Licensing Bill will apply to Ireland. If that is not exactly the contingency contemplated by the hon. Member for Tipperary, it is very like it. The point of the Amendment which I am about to move is that the House should not deal with the question of the liquor traffic in Ireland, because the Government are going to introduce some measure during the Session relating to the question. If this Resolution is carried, it appears to me that the House will be stultifying itself. To allow the Motion to be carried would be a most unfair departure from the ordinary practice of the House. The hon. Member for South Derry was fairly cut out by the operation of the Resolution of March 26, and it is most unfair to deprive me of the opportunity which the fortune of war has placed at my disposal. One thing that makes it more unfair is that Irish business has already absorbed three out of four of the Wednesdays which private Members have had at their disposal during the Session. If Her Majesty's Government will state that it is necessary to pass this Resolution, in view of the Budget Resolutions, I have no more to say. But it appears to me that there is nothing in the Bill of the hon. Member for South Derry which would justify the course the Government have taken in this matter. I hope the House will reject the Motion of the hon. Member. I think I have some cause for complaint in this matter. I know that I am only a Conservative Member; that I am only one of that great number of Conservative Members whom the Metropolis sends to this House in such large numbers. No doubt, if I had been an Ulster Member or a Liberal Unionist, the Government would have done its utmost to strain the forms of the House to give me precedence on this occasion. I have only one question to ask, and that is, do the Government get most votes in Ulster or in London? I hope the House will not stultify itself by departing in the most unfair manner from the ordinary course of business.

(11.50.) MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): In seconding the Amendment, I desire, in the first place, to thank the hon. Member opposite for the manly protest which he has made against the unfair treatment to which I and my Amendment have been subjected by the Government. In the whole course of my political experience I have never received such shabby treatment before. The hon. Member for South Derry has said that my Amendment was carried without a word spoken; but the hon. Member himself moved the Closure, and so prevented the matter from being discussed.

MR. LEA: The word I used was "scarcely."

MR. J. O'CONNOR: What will satisfy the hon. Member? He himself Closured the Debate. If the phrase "political chicanery" were permissible in this House, I would use it with regard to the action of Her Majesty's Government in this matter. They have departed from the usual course of practice in consequence of the pressure which has been brought to bear upon them by certain hon. Members opposite. If the Government had obtained an advantage by means of the ballot over their political opponents they would not have strained the Rules of the House in order to reinstate their opponents in the position which they had lost. I, therefore, protest against this Motion having been allowed to be placed upon the Paper. The Motion has not been placed there for any great political purpose not for any purpose of general utility, not even for the purpose of the Government themselves. It is absurd to say that my Amendment was carried through a misapprehension. The Government have stated that, in the Bill which they intend to introduce, it is not their intention to place in the hands of the Local Authorities the power to grant licences or otherwise to deal with the sale of intoxicating liquors in Ireland. That statement does not affect my Amendment at all.

*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): What I said was—

> "That of course the Government adhered to the intention expressed in the Queen's Speech. It was not usual to state the provisions of any Bill before it has been read a first time; but there will be no inconvenience in my stating that the Irish Bill will not differ from the Bills already passed for England and Scotland in respect of containing provisions to give power to Local Authorities to control the hours during which excisable liquors are sold."

MR. J. O'CONNOR: That bears out my contention. Until we know what powers the Bill proposes to confer I think that no discussion of this question should take place; otherwise you will, in the language of the hon. Member for Peckham, be stultifying yourselves for the mean and miserable purpose of gratifying a few Members who sit on the opposite side of the House. Great pressure has been brought to bear on Her Majesty's Government, and in obedience to that pressure they have allowed matters to take this unprecedented course. The character of this House and that of the Government are at stake on this question. [*Laughter.*] I do not know why hon. Members laugh at this statement, for it is true; and when this Debate is read to-morrow, the people will form their own conclusions on the matter. I say that, in the face of the terms of my Resolution, until the House shall have ascertained the scope and powers of the Local Authority, and the intentions of the Government are declared with regard to Ireland, it shall not be competent to them to legislate on this question, and that any facilities afforded for the discussion of the Bill put down for to-morrow will be a stultification of the principle hitherto followed. I maintain that that Resolution cannot be set aside except by the carrying of some Resolution by which it would be rescinded after full and formal discussion in this House in a regular manner, and not in the way proposed. The hon. Member opposite has spoken of a straining of the Rules of the House. I say that this proposal is not merely a straining of the Rules, but an outrage of the Rules of the House, and of the rights and privileges of Members. I believe I shall have the sympathy of hon. Members on both sides, even among those who differ from me on the main question, in protesting against what I must call a piece of political dishonesty, and I hope that if we come to a vote to-night it will be seen that the House has not lost all sense of honour or propriety with regard to the privileges and rights of its Members.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—In view of the proposal by Government to introduce during the present Session a Licensing Bill, which is to apply to Ireland, this House declines to annul the Resolution of the 26th of March,"—(*Mr. Baumann,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(12.2.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot help thinking that the hon. Member who has just sat down, and my hon. Friend behind me, have discussed this subject with a considerable amount of unnecessary heat. The terms applied by them to the course which the Government favoured were "dishonest" "underhand," "chicanery," "straining of Rules," and "general unfairness." These are words considerably stronger than the case warrants. My hon. Friend behind me (Mr. Baumann) referring to the position which he obtained for his Bill relating to the sweating system on Wednesday's Paper, has spoken of politics as a game. Surely we ought not to speak of politics as we may of card-playing or pitch-and-toss. What are the facts of the case which we have to consider? A Local Veto Bill for Ireland was brought in on March 26th, and an Amendment was moved in opposition to it by the hon. Member (Mr. John O'Connor). Those who voted for the Amendment on that occasion had not in their minds at the time the effect which that Amendment might have upon other Bills not then under discussion. Now, it appears to me that if the Ballot is a game, and the fortune of battle a mere chance, we ought to recognise the fact that my hon. Friend opposite, who had charge of the Local Veto Bill, was the victim of an unfortunate mischance, and it ought to be our business to correct the effect of that mischance. But says my hon. Friend behind me, "What reason can you allege in respect of this particular Bill for attempting to remedy the mischance?" I will tell you. The Bill which my hon. Friend wants to bring forward is a measure dealing with the sweating system, and is brought forward before the result of the Sweating Committee's investigations is known. I do not say that as a hostile comment on my hon. Friend's Bill. But this Bill is brought forward for the second or third year, after the matter has been carefully thrashed out by a Select Committee, and the various provisions of the measure have received the unanimous approval of the Select Committee. If on that ground only the Bill is in a different position from the Bill of my hon. Friend behind me, as far as the action of the Government is concerned, it is, I think, justified by stronger claims. The leader of the House, last year, gave a pledge to offer facilities for the consideration of this measure. The course of public business rendered it absolutely impossible for him to carry out that pledge.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: The Report of the Select Committee was not unanimously agreed to.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It was agreed to by a large majority of the Committee, including my right hon. Friend the Attorney General for Ireland.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: The whole of the Report was not agreed to by the Attorney General for Ireland.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General agreed to the main provisions of the Report.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: The Report introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General, who was Chairman of the Committee, was directly opposed to the main provisions of the Report of the majority.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My hon. and learned Friend differed only as to one part of the Report. In order to make the argument clear with regard to the position of this Bill, I will state what occurred. The Government, last year, promised to give it facilities, but were unable to do so. This Session the fortune of the Ballot gave the hon. Gentleman first place upon Wednesday (to-morrow). The Parliamentary accident, to use the word adopted by my hon. Friend behind me, which deprived him of his chance, occurred on Wednesday, March 26th. Are we, or are we not, more than justified, by perfectly legitimate Parliamentary means, in trying to remedy what was purely accidental? It is not a straining of the Rules of the House. The Rules of the House are well fitted to remedy an error which the House fell into unintentionally; and if the object of the Rules of the House of Commons be to give full expression to the will of the House of Commons we are acting in the spirit of those Rules in accepting the Resolution of my hon. Friend.

(12.20.) MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I am very sorry to differ from my right hon. Friend on this occasion, more especially as I am willing to follow him on ordinary occasions. Like the hero of antiquity, he is invulnerable, except in one weak point, and he has shown what that is to-night. I never, in all my experience of this House, remember a case less fully discussed than that raised by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. I myself wished to address the House at short length, when the hon. Member rose in his place and closured me. I was about to explain to the House what my reasons were for supporting the Amendment, but the hon. Member for South Tyrone would not allow reasonable debate. If he had allowed that debate I would have convinced the Government that we were perfectly right in the course we took. The right hon. Gentleman the leader of the House is not in his place, I regret to see; perhaps it is not convenient for him to appear on this occasion. Is it right for my right hon. Friend (Mr. Balfour) to say that the Government were not informed, when they themselves voted for the Closure? The hon. Member for Tipperary will bear me out, because we were tellers on that occasion. That combination alone shows the righteousness of the cause. I had the honour of telling, with the hon. Member, for the Closure, and when the Question was put from the Chair, the Government changed their opinions and filed through the Lobby in opposition to the hon. Member for South Tyrone's Bill. I venture to think that the Government have not placed themselves in a position which is very creditable to them. If they had intended to follow the course which they are now about to pursue they ought to have done so on the occasion of the Second Reading of the hon. Member's Bill. But I am afraid there is something underneath. If I may be allowed to use a phrase not altogether Parliamentary, they have been "got at" by gentlemen on this side, who wear blue ribbons in their button holes, and who have behind them a large amount of what is called Sabbatarian support, and they have been exercising their influence upon Her Majesty's Government, and this most unusual course has been adopted on this occasion, not as the result of free will, but of pressure, undue pressure, the very improper pressure, which has been brought to bear upon the Government. For that reason, I shall move the Amendment moved by my hon. Friend on this side and seconded by the hon. Member on the other.

(12.25.) MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I cannot refrain from saying that this question was treated in altogether an incompetent manner by the hon. Member for West Tyrone, who had the conduct of the Local Veto Bill for Ireland. So badly did the hon. Member understand the interests of the cause which he undertook to champion that he moved the closure, without considering that the effect of his action would be to prevent this House from considering any measures relating to temperance in Ireland for the remainder of the Session. I am quite in favour of hearing this question adequately and fairly discussed in the House, but I must say that if the hon. Member for West Tyrone will constitute himself the champion of the temperance cause in Ireland, he, at least, might take the trouble not to get us into such difficulties as we find ourselves at present. The hon. Member for Peckham has moved an Amendment to the Resolution which is upon the Paper. I must say the action of the hon. Member for Peckham illustrates in the strongest and strangest possible manner how English Members regard Irish matters. The hon. Member for Peckham is anxious that this Bill, which is regarded with a considerable amount of interest in Ireland, shall not be discussed, because he desires, as I understand, to have a measure of his own discussed. I do not think that an Amendment moved from a motive of that kind will commend itself to the House as a reason why the Resolution should not be carried, and this Bill should not be discussed to-morrow. With regard to the Member for Whitehaven, I am bound to say that his action on such discussions as the present always fills me with extreme wonder. He is not, by any means, a constant attendant in this House. Sometimes, unhappily for everybody, he is not here for considerable periods; but, whenever any proposal is made with regard to temperance legislation in Ireland, the right hon. Member for Whitehaven, whose connection with Ireland I have yet to learn, always appears like a Jack-in-the-Box. I must say, if I was not in favour of having these measures discussed, I should be inclined to favour them after I found the persistent manner in which the hon. Member for Whitehaven comes down to this House upon occasions of this kind and insists upon poking his nose into matters which do not concern him. I do think that the House will be very much interested to know the reasons why the hon. Member insists upon coming here and opposing legislation of this kind. All I can say is that I think he might allow these matters to be discussed as much as possible between Irish Members who hold different opinions on the matter. I can assure him that his interference will only have the effect of stimulating the action of those Irish Members who do not wish to see matters of this kind interfered with by Members like the right hon. Member for Whitehaven, whom we do not regard as at all competent to advise us in these matters. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a considerable difference of opinion with regard to this Bill, which, if this Resolution be passed, will be discussed to-morrow. What I want to know is this, why do those Gentlemen who are opposed to the Bill object to having it discussed if, as they believe, they have a great many arguments of the strongest kind to urge against it. I do not think that is exactly the proper way to propagate their opinion in this matter. If I were opposed to a Bill of this kind, on which there is a difference of opinion, I certainly should endeavour to have that opinion expressed in debate, and I would not attempt to have the measure put off in this sort of manner. I, therefore, urge upon the House to pass the Resolution on the Paper, which will merely have the effect of enabling the House to consider this proposal to-morrow, and when we come to consider the proposal we can then judge it upon its merits. I felt tempted to make these few observations for the purpose of impressing upon hon. Gentlemen who feel themselves to be advocates of the temperance cause, that for the future they will, at least, take common pains to see that they do not injure a cause which they seek to benefit.

(12.30.) MR. DONALD CRAWFORD rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes 151; Noes 22.—(Div. List, No. 53.)

(12.40.) Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 147; Noes 24.—(Div. List, No. 54.)

(12.50.) MR. LEA claimed, "That the Main Question be now put."

Main Question put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes 139; Noes 19.—(Div. List, No. 55.)

Resolved, That the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland having informed the House that the Local Government Bill for Ireland to be introduced this Session, as intimated in Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, will be upon similar lines to the Acts passed for England and Scotland, and will not contain any provisions giving Local Authorities powers to control the times during which exciseable liquors are sold in Ireland, or any such regulations, this House is of opinion that there is nothing to prevent it from proceeding further with legislation in relation to the control and regulation of the trade of excisable liquors in Ireland, any previous Resolution of the House to the contrary notwithstanding.

It being after one of the clock, Mr. Deputy Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at five minutes after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 23rd April, 1890.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition;

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

NORTH-BRITISH AND GLASGOW AND SOUTH-WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANIES' BILL.

(*By Order.*)

*(12.25.) Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to move—

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to allow all Warehousemen who as Traders have petitioned against the Bill within the time limited by the Standing Orders praying to be heard, to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses upon their Petition, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petition."

The object of this Motion is to give a *locus standi* to certain traders of Glasgow before the Select Committee of this House, which is now sitting upon the Bill for the amalgamation of the North-British and the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Companies. These traders petitioned against the Bill, and their Petition came before the Court of *locus standi.* Another Petition was presented by the Corporation of Glasgow, who were allowed a *locus standi*, while that of the traders was refused on the ground that in Scotland the Municipal Corporations represent the trading interests of the constituency. Mr. Pope, who appeared for the Petitioners, admitted that had the case occurred in England—in Liverpool, for instance, instead of Glasgow—no such objection would have held good, but that owing to the peculiarity of the Scotch Law there were precedents in favour of the refusal of a *locus standi.* I may mention that in this case the Corporation of Glasgow were by no means unanimous in resolving to oppose the Bill. They had considerable discussion on the subject in February last, and there were divisions which were very close as to the course which they ought to adopt. I believe that the Committee commenced its sittings upon the Bill yesterday, but the counsel for the Corporation of Glasgow only put in a formal appearance, so that the traders' interests are left practically unrepresented in this important contest. One local firm has been allowed a *locus standi*, but large trading interests have no representation at all. Now, I protest altogether against the distinction which is drawn between the traders of the Scottish Royal burghs and the traders in English boroughs. The theoretical distinction is that in Scotland the Corporations of the Royal burghs are held to represent the trade interests, whereas in England the Corporations only represent the municipal and sanitary interests of the community. Turning to the reasons for which this theoretical distinction is drawn, I find that in 1886, when certain Scottish Amalgamation Bills came before Parliament, the *locus standi* of the Petitioners was disallowed, on the ground, as reported in *Clifford and Stevens*, that the Corporations were elected by Guilds and Trade Societies previous to the Municipal Corporations Act, and that in consequence the traders were fully represented. Now, I have no objection to Corporations having a *locus standi* in the case of important Amalgamation Bills, but I do not think it ought to be a ground for excluding the traders, who are not directly represented by them, and who may have entirely different interests. To my mind it is preposterous that the *locus standi* should depend upon a state of matters which existed 50 years ago. It may be said that there is even now some representation of Traders' and Merchants' Guilds in the Corporations of the Scottish Royal burghs. That is quite true, but these Guilds are things of the past, and they exist simply as Friendly Societies. I am supported in my proposal by a very high authority. In 1872 there was a Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and of this House upon the amalgamation of Railway Companies, and that Committee reported that no trader or other person who had an interest in procuring fair terms and consideration from a Railway Company should be excluded by any rule of *locus standi* from appearing before the Committee. This recommendation of the Committee was not restricted to English Corporations and traders, but was extended to Scotland. As the Court of *locus standi* is entitled to give expression to the opinion of this House upon this point, I think it might very well have over-ridden musty precedents, and have given effect to the recommendation of the Joint Committee. It did not do so, however, and the result is that in this instance the traders of Glasgow, although theoretically represented by the Corporation, now find themselves even without the theoretical representation, owing to the fact that the counsel for the Corporation have only put in a formal appearance before the Committee. These Amalgamation Bills affect immense interests in Scotland, and I think that the Petitioners are fairly entitled in this instance to state their case before the Committee which is to decide the fate of the Bill. I will only add that the question is one of urgency, seeing that the Committee has already commenced its sitting. I shall, however, be quite willing to withdraw the Resolution upon an understanding that the Petition of the traders is allowed to go at once before the Court of Referees.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to allow all Warehousemen who as Traders have petitioned against the Bill within the time limited by the Standing Orders praying to be heard, to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses upon their Petition, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petition."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

(12.40.) MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): No doubt this is a question of considerable importance to the people of Scotland. At one time the burgesses of a Royal burgh in Scotland appointed the Town Council, so that the Town Council really represented the trading community of the burgh, but that is no longer the case. The Corporation of a Royal burgh no longer represents the trading interests of the burgh any more than they are represented by an English Corporation, so that there is no reason why there should be any distinction in the case of Scotland and England. I think, therefore, that it is desirable that the matter should be re-heard by the *locus standi* Committee. Another point is that the Corporation of Glasgow, who are certainly entitled to appear and be heard, have only entered a formal appearance against the Bill, and do not consider that they are in any way bound to take up the interests of the traders, who are principally warehousemen in Glasgow. These warehousemen conduct two businesses, one of which is a local trade and the other an export trade. One of these businesses very properly comes under the purview of the Corporation of Glasgow, but the export trade does not. It would, therefore, be a great injustice to the traders to be deprived of the opportunity of having their case heard.

*(12.45.) MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): Perhaps I may save the time of the House if I state at once the view which is taken of this Resolution by the Court of *locus standi*. The Court, I need scarcely say, is always anxious to give effect to what it knows to be the general wish of the House in regard to principle. The Joint Committee of the Lords and Commons desired that in amalgamation cases a very liberal construction should be put upon rights of *locus standi*, and, as a proof that the Court acted so in this very case, I may mention that they gave leave to appear to a firm of locomotive manufacturers, who alleged that their interests were likely to be specially injured. The Petition of the warehousemen was opposed on the ground that there was nothing to distinguish their case from the general case, so that to give them a separate *locus standi* would only be multiplying the hearing of counsel. The Petitions of the Corporation and of the traders are almost identical. Both complain that the proposed amalgamation may deprive the City of Glasgow of the advantages of competition. The Corporation say that they are deeply interested in upholding for the public the benefits conferred by the separate existence of these two railway systems, and they go so far as to say that they oppose the amalgamation, not only upon the terms suggested in the Bill, but upon any terms whatever. The Petition of the warehousemen does not carry the case further, the chief matter in question being the export and import of goods by railway. The Court decided

that if they granted the *locus standi* it would virtually amount to the hearing of the case twice over, and on that ground alone the *locus standi* was refused. I must observe that the Petition of the Corporation of Glasgow was somewhat misleading, and that the Court were induced to believe they would effectively represent all parties concerned. That now appears not to be their intention, and if the hon. Member for the College Division (Dr. Cameron) will withdraw the Resolution, the Court of *locus standi* will at once re-hear the case. I wish to add that, with the Scotch Members who have spoken, and others whom I have consulted, I believe there is no reason why the right of a Corporation to be heard to the exclusion of traders should be put higher in Scotland than in England.

*(12.47.) A CIVIL LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Wigton): I was prepared to offer a strenuous opposition to the Resolution because it seemed to me to amount to a re-consideration, and, perhaps, a reversal of the decision of the Court upstairs after a patient hearing of the case; but, after the remarks which have been made by the hon. Member for the College Division, and the hon. Member for Perth (Mr. C. S. Parker), I feel that the promoters of the Bill would be scarcely justified in pressing their opposition further. The promoters have no desire to shut out any person or body of persons who have a just right to be heard, and until it transpired yesterday that the Corporation of Glasgow only put in a formal appearance against the Bill, they did believe that the traders would have had a full opportunity of being heard. The promoters, therefore, are quite prepared to accept the Resolution, or one which I understand is to be substituted for it.

*DR. CAMERON: I am quite ready to withdraw the Resolution in favour of one referring the matter back again to the Court.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Ordered, That the case of the Warehousemen who as Traders have petitioned against the North-British and Glasgow and South-Western Railway Companies' Bill within the time limited by the Standing Orders be referred back to the Court of Referees, and that the said Court do sit and proceed forthwith.—(*Mr. Charles Parker.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 7.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*(12.50.) MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill I have to express my regret at the loss of one of our Colleagues, who most earnestly desired to see this measure passed into law. I refer to the late Mr. Biggar. The importance of this Bill was recognised last year by the Chief Secretary for Ireland when a very influential deputation waited upon him in Dublin Castle. The right hon. Gentleman told them that the time for argument had passed; that the case was before the country; and that what we had to do was to get the measure disposed of without further delay. That is the feeling of the great majority of the people of Ireland. They desire and demand this legislation. No doubt some of our friends in England think that the time is not ripe for legislation so far as England is concerned. After the Report of the Royal Commission there can be little doubt as to the feeling of Wales. Nor can there be any doubt in regard to the view taken of the question in Scotland, and still less in regard to Ireland. I do not believe in legislation in advance of public opinion upon this subject; but with regard to Ireland I maintain that legislation lags behind public opinion. So much has that been the case that there have been doubts among some of our friends as to the competency of this Parliament to deal with the question, and I believe that after the long struggle we have had it behoves this House to pass the measure on this occasion, seeing that it will prove to the Irish people that we are able to legislate for their wants and wishes. I do not pretend that it can be passed unanimously, but the minority who are opposed to it consist chiefly of those who are engaged in the traffic in Ireland. In 1878 a Bill dealing with this subject was passed, but it was a Bill limited to four years only, and since then it has formed the subject of an Annual Continuance Bill. That is a most unsatisfactory state of things. If the measure is a good one it ought to be made per-

manent, and not left to an Annual Continuance Bill. Nearly every year since the passing of the original Bill an attempt has been make to deal with the question. In 1884 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir G. Treveleyan) brought in a Bill when Chief Secretary for Ireland. In 1887 the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor) thought the question ought to be considered, and asked the House to appoint a Select Committee, and in 1888 a Committee was appointed to inquire into the working of the Act of 1878. That Committee made a most careful inquiry; they heard a large number of witnesses; and they had two Reports laid before them—one prepared by the Chairman, which, with slight amendments, was agreed to; and the other by the hon. Member for Tipperary. It is upon the Amended Report of the Chairman that the present Bill is founded. The Report of the hon. Member for Tipperary was directed against the Sunday Closing Act, but the only persons who voted in favour of it were the hon. Member himself and the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. P. M'Donald). The rest of the Committee voted against it.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Two out of how many? How many Members of the Committee were present?

*Mr. LEA: Six or eight voted for the Chairman's Report, and only two for that of the hon. Member for Tipperary.

*Mr. P. M'DONALD (Sligo): Because the other four, who would have voted for it, were absent.

*Mr. LEA: Then my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) brought in a Bill for the earlier closing of public-houses on Saturday, which was passed by a large majority in this House, and was referred to the same Committee. Evidence was taken upon it, which was even stronger than the evidence in favour of the original Bill. The Committee reported the united Bill to the House, and it has been waiting ever since for an opportunity to have it dealt with. There were 35 witnesses called before the Committee. Of these, 15 may be described as official witnesses. These official witnesses included the Recorder of Dublin, the Coroner of Dublin, District Inspectors for various counties, the Chief Commissioner of Police in Dublin, one or two Resident Magistrates, and Mr. Reid, the Chief Commissioner of the Royal Irish Constabulary. It is a remarkable fact that not one of these witnesses disapproved of the Bill. Both as to the working of the Sunday Closing Act in the past and also as to the extreme desirability of shortening the hours on Sunday and on Saturday night, all these independent witnesses reported favourably. The opinions were so strong that it seems to me unnecessary to quote them, but I desire to quote one or two words from the evidence of the Recorder of Dublin. That gentleman said—

> "Shorten the hours and the opportunity if you want to help the people."

These words do not seem very strong in the House of Commons, yet when I say that Mr. Faulkner came from a bed of sickness, after suffering a severe domestic loss, in order to earnestly entreat the Committee to pass the Bill, I think the words will carry great weight. Asked as to his experience of the Sunday Closing Act in the past, he said—and this applies only to Dublin, where a shortening of hours only has taken place—

> "I attribute it to the Sunday Closing Act and the vigilance of the police that crime has certainly decreased in Dublin, and that the misery is also less than it was 11 years ago."

The Recorder of Dublin added that eight-tenths of the crime in Dublin arises through drink. The hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor), in a discussion in the House some time ago, referred to Mr. O'Donel, the Police Magistrate in Dublin; but Mr. O'Donel gave evidence in favour of shortening the hours, and Mr. O'Donel also spoke of the drunkenness in Dublin. With regard to Saturday night, he said—

> "Saturday is a terrible night for drunkenness and waste of wages."

That is a very strong expression of opinion. But Mr. O'Donel also said that 80 per cent. of the drunkenness in Dublin arises from Saturday night drinking. The evidence of the Rev. Canon Sheehan, the earnest parish priest of Cork, greatly impressed the Committee. He said—

> "My own opinion is that Saturday early closing is a matter of vital consequence for our people."

And then, when asked with regard to Sunday closing, he said—

> "Total Sunday Closing is a matter of great importance to the people."

Asked by the Chairman a question with regard to home drinking, which is one of the bugbears of all these Bills, the rev. gentleman said—

> "I do not believe it will have that effect in Cork."

There was one other witness I wish to specially mention. The city of Londonderry is the largest city which has adopted the Sunday Closing Act. In 1878 it was suggested that the city of Derry should be left out of the Act, but, in consequence of the strong feeling expressed against the adoption of that course, that city was included. It is very interesting to hear that in that city, which has a population of about 30,000, the Sunday Closing Act has worked very well. Sir William Miller, the Mayor of the City of Derry, who, as a medical man, is well able to understand the benefit of an Act like this, appeared before the Committee, and gave us statistics in regard to drinking before and after the passing of the Act of 1878. Those statistics clearly proved what was said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir G. Trevelyan) when, as Chief Secretary, he introduced a similar Bill to the House. Sir William Miller said the arrests for drunkenness have diminished one-half since the Act was in force. One would imagine that it would just be in the largest city under the Act where, if anywhere, drunkenness would prevail, and yet during the eight years succeeding the commencement of the operation of the Act the arrests for drunkenness in the City of Derry were 500 less than they had been in the eight years previous to the passing of the Act. Now, what is the opinion of witnesses who did not give evidence before the Committee? I do not propose to make many quotations from outside the evidence, but the Lord Primate of Ireland, who has signed a Petition presented to the House to-day in favour of this Bill, wrote a letter to the First Lord of the Treasury, begging, on behalf of himself and his rev. colleagues, the House to pass the Bill; and I have letters from other very eminent individuals in Ireland—Archbishop Croke and Mr. Michael Davitt. Some hon. Members may differ upon political questions from the two latter gentlemen, but there is no man in the House who will say that Archbishop Croke and Mr. Michael Davitt are not patriots of the highest type. Archbishop Croke presided at a Convention at which a resolution to the following effect was passed:—

> "That this Convention approves of the Irish Sunday Closing Bill now before the House, and urges Parliament to pass it speedily in a permanent form, which will give the full benefit of the Act to the whole of Ireland; and that this Convention also approves of the early closing on Saturday night of houses licensed for the sale of intoxicating drink."

That well expresses the opinions of Archbishop Croke. Mr. Michael Davitt was unable to attend the meeting, but he sent a letter in which this paragraph occurred—

> "The fact that, poor as our country is, we waste over £11,000,000 a year on intoxicating drinks is a most deplorable one to dwell upon. Half that sum, needlessly wasted as it is now, would set every woollen mill in Ireland running to-morrow, and thereby be the means of keeping our young people at home instead of turning out of the country for want of employment."

Time prevents me quoting, as I had hoped to do, the opinions of many of the Bishops of Ireland, but I may say I believe that every Bishop of the Protestant Church is strongly in favour of this legislation, and that most of the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church are also strongly in favour of it. There are only two of the latter who are in any way opposed to it, and I do not think they wish that the present Act, as it exists now, should be lost or repealed. Turning to the opposition to the Bill, allow me to say that, judging from the evidence given before the Committee, it is only the opposition of the trade that we have to fear or to deal with. The Recorder of Dublin said—

> "Outside the trade, I think all independent opinion is in favour of it."

And the Rev. Dr. Brown, Roman Catholic Bishop of Ferns, in a letter he wrote in 1888, said—

> "I am of opinion there are none opposed to the Sunday Closing of public houses except those who have a pecuniary interest in the sale of drink."

That is rather confirmed by the Amendments to the Bill, which appear on the Paper. The first Amendment is that in the name of the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. P. M'Donald), and is to the effect—

> "That it is inexpedient to proceed further with the consideration of a measure which proposes to place fresh restrictions upon an important Irish trade."

It is notorious that misery existed in

Ireland in consequence of drunkenness, and am I to understand that, in the opinion of the hon. Member, this measure is to be rejected because it is likely to stop the sale of drink? Archbishop Croke, in a letter addressed to the *Freeman's Journal*, on the 19th of March, said—

> "The excessive use of strong drink is everywhere hurtful and unhappily on the increase, and has been simply ruinous to Ireland. What need is there for me to recount to you its hideous and horrifying results? It has made countless homes desolate; it has given victims without number to the grave, the gaol, the prison, the workhouse, the ocean."

And then he went on, in equally strong language, to regret the existence of drunkenness in Ireland. Am I to understand that that evil is still to exist in order that the trade may continue to prosper? The next Amendment I propose to notice is that of the hon Member for Tipperary. The hon Gentleman intends to move—

> "That, in view of the strong expression of opinion by the most influential representatives of large urban populations in Ireland hostile to any proposal for the extension of the Irish Sunday Closing Act, this House deems it unsafe to further curtail the hours at present sanctioned for the opening of public houses on Sunday."

I ask the hon. Member where is this strong expression of opinion? It does not appear in the evidence before the Committee. What meetings have been held to show it? If there had been a large number of meetings held throughout Ireland expressing great antagonism to the Bill, the hon. Member might say there is a strong expression of opinion in opposition to the measure. But no such evidence came before the Committee. [*Cries of* "Oh! oh!"] Mr. Reid, the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary, said he had never heard of a single meeting outside Dublin against the Act of 1878. There was one meeting held in Dublin, but the evidence with regard to that meeting was that the room was not full. With that exception, I do not know of any public meeting in opposition to the Sunday Closing Act. There have been plenty of meetings held on the other side. There have been large meetings in Belfast and in Cork, and, last December, I attended a meeting in Dublin. If I may judge from copies of resolutions sent to me, there have been many meetings in favour of the Bill all over Ireland. The Mayors of Sligo and Waterford were called in the Committee against the Bill, but both of them said that public opinion in their cities was quite apathetic. It may, therefore, be taken that even in those places there is no opposition against the Act except that of the trade. The great opposition to the measure always has been that it will lead to secret drinking. If that could be proved it would certainly be a very sound reason for opposing the measure. But that was alleged against the original Bill passed in 1878. What was the evidence given before the Committee? That it has not led to secret drinking. The Chief Commissioner of the Dublin police, the District Inspectors of Belfast, Waterford, Sligo, Clonmel, and Limerick, Sir William Miller, the Recorder of Dublin, and the Rev. Canon Sheehan, all agree that there are no bogus clubs and no increase of shebeening. It is, therefore, clear that there is no fear of secret drinking if this Bill is passed. Another hon. Member (Mr. O'Hanlon) has an Amendment on the Paper to the effect that it is especially convenient to the poorer classes of the people to make their purchases up to 11 o'clock on Saturday night, and that—

> "As in the greater number of cases in these cities and towns, the grocery and liquor trades are combined, it would be a great deprivation and a serious inconvenience to the people if they were prevented from making their necessary purchases as hitherto."

The evidence given before the Committee goes to show that it will be no great inconvenience to the people, but just the contrary. Most of the wages in Ireland are paid between 1 and 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and often men spend a large part of their wages in the public-houses, going home late in the evening, and handing over the balance to their wives, to provide for the necessities of the families. A change in the law that will compel the heads of households to provide the necessaries for the families at an earlier hour than 11 o'clock on Saturday night will, undoubtedly, be a most beneficial one; it will tend very much to the sobriety of the people and to the comfort of their homes. Another Amendment refers to the dwellings of the poor. I greatly sympathise with that Amendment. The House will agree that improved dwellings for the people will tend to the sobriety of the people, but the Recorder of Dublin stated in his evidence that it is not only improved dwellings that will improve the labouring classes. That gentleman said also, that at the present time there are 32,000 families in Dublin living in 7,000 houses; and he added, that the cause of this, in great measure, is drink Again, it is said that the Bill, if passed, will be an infringement of the liberties of the people. All restrictive legislation of this kind must lead to an infringement of liberty; but I believe that the great bulk of the population believe that restrictions are necessary. The labouring classes, who know the evil and the misery caused by an excessive use of drink, will not be unwilling to make the sacrifices demanded of them. I am thankful that this measure is supported by men of all Parties in the House. In Ireland this is not looked upon as a Party question, but as a social question, commanding the approval of the best men of all classes. I commend the Bill to the House because the working of the Act of 1878 has been so satisfactory. I beg to move the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Lea.*)

*(1.26.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): I rise to support the Second Reading of this Bill. The original Sunday Closing Bill was brought forward with the almost unanimous approval of the Irish Members of all Parties, but for a considerable period the House refused to legislate on the subject. When the House did legislate, my hon. Friend the Member for Tipperary will admit the legislation had the consent and approval of the vast majority of the Irish people. So strong was the feeling in Ireland on the subject of Sunday Closing that before the House of Commons made Sunday Closing the law of the land, there were certain districts in Ireland where public opinion was actually able to put in operation Sunday Closing without an Act of Parliament at all. This Act expired, and it has been combined in the annual Bill for the continuance of expiring laws. So far as I and my Colleagues are concerned, matters might have rested there, but the opponents of the measure insisted upon it being referred to a Select Committee. The Select Committee reported in favour of the measure. Surely, therefore, it is not the supporters of the measure who ought to be called upon to prove that the measure has the support of the great mass of the people of Ireland, but it is the opponents of the Act who ought to prove, if they can, that it has not the support of the Irish people. We are told that Sunday Closing in Ireland has not been successful in some of the country districts. Now, that is a matter on which I can speak with some personal experience, or, at least, of one district. I do not forget the state of the country roads in that district on Sundays before Sunday Closing was the law of the land, and I cannot be blind to the improvement since the Act was passed. I am quite aware that the Act is not worked as it should be by the Irish police, but the Irish police have what they consider a more important duty to perform, in looking after dangerous characters like myself. In their view this is far more important than detecting infringements of the Sunday Closing Act. I think the state of the police in Ireland is admirably illustrated by a little anecdote I have from a lady friend resident in a village in the South of Ireland. Two men were fighting in the centre of a small crowd when a sergeant of police and a few of his men came on the scene. "What is the meaning," said the sergeant, "of this mis-conductious behaviour?" "Sure, sergeant," answered one in the crowd, "It's only a little matter between ourselves; its nothing against the Government or Coercion." So the sergeant with his men retired to the barracks, and the fight was continued. Now, of course, I cannot help being aware of the feeling among many of my Colleagues in opposition to this Bill, and, although I am but a young Member, I hope they will bear with me while I say a few words on this point. It is a matter of notoriety that the leader of our Party does not vote on this occasion. We know perfectly well that his position is one of absolute neutrality.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: He spoke and voted on it last time.

*MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I still maintain that I am right in saying that our leader has taken up a position of neutrality. It is not a Party question with which the Irish Party are concerned, and I admit the wisdom our leader has shown in not taking a position on either side, for he knows perfectly well that if he did take either side that would influence a large number of his followers, but this has not been, and never will be, a Party question, and he is wise in not acting as the leader of the Party.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: He spoke in favour of the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member will have the opportunity of making a speech presently, and of explaining any difference of opinion he may hold.

*MR. PIERCE MAHONY: A number of my Colleagues have adopted the decision that they are best following our leader by taking no part in the debate. Now, I would ask them to consider the difference in their position and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell.) Our Party are not united on this subject, and I must say that my view of the matter is this, that it does not matter a straw to the Party which position, in regard to this Bill, I, or any individual Member of the Party may take, and Members who think they ought not to take any position in regard to it, attach, if I may say so without offence, a little too much importance to their individual position as members of the Party. Another point that is urged by some members of the Party, is that, as a matter of principle, we ought not to vote for Sunday Closing until we have an opportunity of making the alteration of the law in a Home Rule Parliament. They complain that it might throw further power into the hands of the Government. One of my hon. Friends says "So it would." Now, the only power the passing of this Bill could possibly put into the hands of the Government would be in certain cases where the police might bring prosecutions against publicans for a breach of the Sunday Closing Law. But they cannot bring such a prosecution unless a breach of the Act has actually taken place, and it would be a prosecution, not under the Coercion Act, but before an ordinary Bench of Magistrates, and my experience of Irish Magistrates is that they certainly are not given to taking an adverse view of the conduct of publicans; if there is any complaint it is that they do not convict readily enough. There is no contention, so far as I can see, that any injustice would be done; it is merely an assertion that certain offences may be committed for which men may be punished, and they would be rightly punished. Then as regards the matter of principle that we are not to take any legislation until we get it from a Home Rule Parliament. I could understand there would be something in that argument if it were applied all round. But it is not applied all round. What about the Drainage Bills of last Session? What about the Light Railways Bill? It is right to join with the Government to pass a Bill for making Light Railways in Ireland; it is right to co-operate with the Government to provide the means for draining a few wretched acres of land in some district in Ireland; but when, instead of a few acres of land, you have human beings, tens of thousands of degraded men and helpless women ruined, their homes destroyed and made perfect hells upon earth, tens of thousands of little children neglected or fitted only for lives of infamy and crime, then we are to be told that, as a matter of principle, we ought not to join with the Government to provide a remedy for some of these evils! I do appeal to my Colleagues most earnestly to consider what this means. If they can support a Bill for the drainage of a few acres of land, if there is no breach of principle in that, surely to goodness they can support, in every possible way, a Bill which will give some help, some protection, to tens of thousands of their fellow countrymen who are suffering from this accursed trade in drink. Now, what do we hope to do by this Bill? No sane man hopes to make a people sober by legislation; but we know that a cry is going up from thousands of poor, weak, miserable creatures who want to be protected, who ask to be protected from their own weakness, their own folly. We want to try to remove, in some degree, temptation from the paths of men of this kind; and we propose to do it chiefly on the day dedicated to the service of Him who has never refused to listen to the prayer of the helpless. No question of Party arises; every Member will vote according to his individual feeling and conscience. It is no Party question in this country, nor is it in Ireland. Though my hon. Friend the Member for Tipperary and I are not united in our views on this subject, that does not interfere one whit with the cordial fellowship with which we work on every other subject. I have been led beyond the length of time I intended to occupy in seconding the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill.

*(1.40.) MR. P. M'DONALD: I rise to move the Amendment standing in my name, and I do so with mixed feelings of indignation and gratification, of indignation at the conduct of the Government on this occasion, and of gratification at what I believe will be the consequence of their action, in the alienation of their best supporters in this country. We know how the Government have acted upon this very question, although not this very Bill, when they went in a solid body into the Lobby against the Bill then before the House, and yet, only last night, they went in a solid body to the other side in support of this Bill. But, strangely enough, they sent one of their Members, the Patronage Secretary, into the other Lobby to represent them, and to make believe to the traders of England that, they are not in favour of passing a Bill of this kind. It is true this hon. Gentleman was not alone from the Conservative side, but he was alone as representing the Government. We had several independent Members from the other side supporting us, and I am hopeful of their support in the future, and, although I condemn the Government for their action, it is my duty, and I do it heartily, to tender to those hon. Members the gratitude of the trade whose rights they have endeavoured to maintain. I need hardly remind the House that, in sending the Patronage Secretary to represent the Government last night in our Lobby, it was in view of a very near General Election, but I doubt very much whether this will carry great weight. I may say the trade in England will not be hoodwinked by such flimsy pretences. I tell the trade they will be betrayed by the Government when the Government think it expedient. The Chief Secretary, last night, as the mouthpiece of the Government, in a very amusing manner told us it was a game of chance, as between promoters and opponents of the Bill, and he said, as in all games of chance, if you do not get a good hand why you may change it. But I never knew that this was the rule in a game of chance, and I think the right hon. Gentleman shows he has more knowledge of "golf" than of "nap," when he makes such a statement. Unquestionably the Government may "look out for squalls" among their friends the licensed traders of England. They can no longer go before the electors with the cry of "Beer and Bible." Perhaps they may try the cry of "Rum and Righteousness," but the rum will be predominant. The hon. Member for North Derby, who has introduced this Bill said no meetings have been held to protest against the Bill. Well, the only meetings I have heard of in connection with this subject have been those organised by professional and non-professional agitators, the same speakers turning up again and again in different parts of the country. [*Cries of* "No."] Yes, and if my hon. Friend who interrupts had read the papers as carefully as I have he would know I am correct. My hon. Friend and Colleague the Member for Meath, went, I think, a little out of his way in dragging the leader of our Party into this question, and, in this, did not display his usual judgment. But as he has done so, I deem it my duty to say that our leader has spoken on the question, and he spoke to this purpose he expressed his desire that the question should be left over until such time as we could settle it with our other local affairs. If he did not speak against the Bill, he certainly did not speak in favour of it.

An hon. MEMBER: He did not vote.

*MR. P. M'DONALD: No prosecutions, it has been said, have taken place under the Act, and I think I can give a plain reason for that. It is simply this, for the last seven years the police have been otherwise engaged, and have had too much to do in another direction. They look upon ordinary police duties as entirely beneath them. They do not think of making arrests for drunkenness, and the police themselves have been the most flagrant breakers of the Licence Laws in Ireland. It has been said that the voice of Ireland has not been raised against the measure, but I ask, Has there been any demand in Ireland for it? Certainly not. Bishops and priests in Ireland, who in a matter of this kind represent the great body of the people, have not collectively made any such demand. It is true that some 10 or 12 letters were elicited furtively, simply because one of the paid Secretaries of the Association wrote to the Bishops, and naturally published their Lordships' replies; but that, I think, cannot be construed into a demand from the Bishops of Ireland; and I may say that, although all were written to, only half the number did reply. No; the demand for this is made by one class only, and that demand is due to fanatical pertinacity on the part of professional agitators. To their action the introduction of the Bill the year before last was due, and, resulting from that, the reference to a Select Committee. I need hardly remind the House how such Committees are formed. Mainly at the direction, and entirely within the discretion, of the Whips of the Party. If the Whip is in support of the measure, he will nominate his friends upon it. Certainly we had on that Committee one Gentleman to whose perfect impartiality in every respect I am glad to bear testimony—I mean the Attorney General for Ireland. He was ready to act fairly to both sides, but in the face of the constitution of the Committee in the proportion of nine to six, it was not to be supposed that the joint Report to be drawn up would be other than one-sided. It was in consequence of this that the hon. Member for Tipperary and I drew up another Report. We received evidence, I may say, from almost every representative man in Ireland. This evidence I will not now go into, but I will refer to the evidence of the Mayor of Sligo, because the hon. Member for South Derry has alluded to him; and I may say, in addition, that the hon. Gentleman who spoke so fully on the evidence given before the Committee applied himself solely and entirely to the evidence in favour of his own view, and did not, as he might have done, say a word or two in justice to the other side. The Mayor of Sligo has been referred to as if his evidence was in favour of the Bill. He, in answer to the question put to him, said—

> "There is as much drink sold in Sligo on Sunday as if all the public houses were open; but the sale is confined to the low public houses and shebeens, and the drink supplied in these places is extremely bad."

Well, I am sure that is not in favour of the Bill. Further, the same witness said—

> "In my opinion, the earlier closing on Saturday, if followed by the total closing on Sunday would lead to an increase in the amount of drink taken home by the people, and would also increase the illicit traffic both on Saturday night and Sunday."

Well, that is not in favour of the Bill. The witness goes on, in answer to other questions, to express his opinion that total closing on Sunday would be injurious in Sligo to a large number of people, and that the bad habits of some of the people would not be cured thereby. This only corroborates what my hon. Friend the Member for Meath has said, and in which all men of influence, religious and social, agree, that Acts of Parliament do not compel sobriety. There is no Bishop in Ireland who is not engaged at the present moment in promoting a scheme which will be, as it were, a renewal of the Temperance League associated with the name of Father Mathew. The movement has met with the acquiescence of the priests and people, and I, for one, am a hearty supporter of it. I can tell the House that one, Father Mathew, could do more good in the direction of temperance than a million of Tyrone spouters and hundreds of Acts of Parliament. A Welsh Sunday Closing Commission was appointed recently, and the Commissioners have reported that, in those districts in which the principle of the Act was undoubtedly in harmony with the wishes and feelings of the majority of the people, it is least needed as a means of securing sobriety, whereas in those parts of Wales in which the principle is not generally accepted, its provisions have been constantly evaded. "We cannot, on the face of the evidence before us, say that the effect has been salutary." Now, Sir, that, summarised, means that where Sunday Closing is necessary its adoption in Wales has done evil instead of good, and that where it was not necessary it produced no effect either for good or for evil. The Commissioners further say that in Cardiff and the mining districts the Act cannot be said to have diminished intemperance, and, finally, they say they "must dismiss, as impracticable, the proposal to close public-houses on Sundays." Could any Report more strongly condemn the principle which i is now sought to be permanently enforced in Ireland? Even worse effects have been produced by Sunday Closing in Scotland. I find, on reference to Scotch papers, that on several recent Sundays the police of Glasgow have been making raids on shebeen houses; that they have arrested many men and women, when they have been taken to the station midst yelling and shouting crowds—a pretty spectacle for a Sabbath—that they have seized large quantities of beer and spirits, and that, in some cases, they have come across illicit stills. In one case—it was, I think, on the 16th March—they made a descent on a house, arrested 12 persons, and seized 280 pint bottles of beer, nine bottles of whisky, 22 bottles of lemonade, and 63 empty beer bottles. At a second visit to the same house 13 persons were taken into custody. At another house eight men and three women were arrested, and as the prisoners and the liquor were being conveyed to the police office a large crowd assembled, stones were thrown at the police, and a gallon jar of whisky broken. Similar seizures to these were made on succeeding Sundays, and even last Sunday a second descent was made on the house of a man named Pack, who evidently had not been deterred from carrying on this improper trade by previous police raids. On this occasion 329 bottles of beer were seized. I hope the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading of this Bill will take to heart the lessons taught by Scotch and Welsh experience. We do not in Ireland want to see such scenes as have recently disgraced Glasgow on Sundays, and I appeal to the Government to save us from such deplorable degradation. At least, do not force this Bill on us now. Wait, rather, until we have the management of our own affairs. This question has never yet been submitted to the Irish constituencies; the opinion of the Irish people has never yet been taken on it, and that being so, and with the experience of Scotland and Wales before us, I ask the House to reject the Bill and to accept the Amendment which stands in my name. (2.28.)

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is inexpedient to proceed further with the consideration of a measure which proposes to place fresh restrictions upon an important Irish trade, and which in its present shape has never been submitted to the judgment of the Irish constituencies, and also with regard to which no adequate steps have at any time been taken to ascertain the sense of the people of Ireland,"—*(Mr Peter M'Donald,)*

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(2.43.) MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the Amendment which stands in the name of my hon. Friend. I cannot say that I like altogether the wording of the Amendment, nor that portion of it which refers to the expediency of proceeding with this Bill on the ground of its placing restrictions on an important Irish trade. I do not altogether hold with that. But I support the Amendment on account of the embodiment of these words:—

> "That this Bill, in its present shape, has never been submitted to the judgment of the Irish constituencies, and also with regard to which no adequate steps have at any time been taken to ascertain the sense of the people of Ireland."

I entirely dissent from the proposition laid down by the Mover of the Bill, when he says that there was no opposition to Sunday Closing except those pecuniarily interested in the sale of drink. That statement was most uncalled for, and was not justified, and certainly it is repudiated by me and many of my Colleagues. We discuss this question on the broad ground of principle, and we allege that Bills of this kind do not tend to promote temperance; on the contrary, they have rather a mischievous effect the other way. Whether we discuss early Saturday Closing or Sunday Closing, we discuss it on broad grounds, and with no interest, direct or indirect, in the perpetuation of the drink traffic. We are as strongly and conscientiously opposed to drunkenness of any sort as any hon. Members in this House. The *gravamen* of proof in support of this Bill lies on its proposers. What proof have they given that the people of Ireland desire this legislation. I meet the assertion with an absolute denial. I can quote, in support of my contention, speeches of the Mover of the Bill, in which he said that the people of Ireland were quite apathetic on this matter. But I contend that so far as feeling in favour of the Bill has been ascertained, that it is an artificially fostered and created opinion—created by agitators who, I do not say otherwise, proceed on conscientious motives and high principles. But this agitation has been confined to a few Associations of professed teetotallers, who have never consulted the feeling of the vast majority of the people of Ireland. We oppose this Bill because it contains all the elements of coercive legislation. You cannot make people sober by Act of Parliament, and, undoubtedly, the experience of other places outside Ireland has not been such as to justify other coercive legislation in this direction. The Mover of the Bill says it is desired by the people of Ireland, but when I turn to the evidence of the Committee I find that, as far as that goes, the evidence is the other way. The trades of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford have held public meetings, where this very important question has been submitted to open meeting — to the deliberation of those for whom it is primarily intended. At all these meetings the audiences carried resolutions by sweeping majorities against the hon. Member's Bill. At Cork, 12 months ago, a meeting was held in the Mechanics' Hall. [An hon. MEMBER: A ticket meeting.] Yes, but the tickets were procurable by any tradesman who chose to apply. The meeting was representative of all tradesmen, skilled and unskilled, and the vast majority of the meeting were against legislation of this kind. The President of the Cork Trades gave evidence against the Bill.

*MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg pardon. Mr. Monro did not give evidence against the Bill.

*MR. FLYNN: I will deal with Mr. Monro's evidence in a moment or two. This Bill is not asked for by the people of Ireland; certainly not; no large section of the working classes, who are supposed to be most interested in the measure, demand it; and, therefore, it is a class of legislation of a most unfair and anomalous character. I find that Mr. Monro, President of the Trades Council of Belfast, in reply to a question put to him, said he believed Sunday Closing would lead to more illicit drinking than at present; that was to say, that after the legal hours of closing publicans would sell after hours; it would lead to shebeening, or selling without a licence.

*MR. JOHNSTON: Read Answer 9164 of the Report.

*MR. FLYNN: I have not got the Report in my hand. I cannot travel about with the Blue Books, and have got my extracts in a handy form. If we turn to page 13 of the Report we find that Mr. Crean, a teetotaller, who is a Town Councillor, or at any rate a person occupying a representative position in the city of Cork, and who spoke on behalf of the trade of Cork, that gentleman said he had made it his business to mix himself up with the people before the Bill was introduced, and had made it his business to look round the city, going both to the lowest dens and the highest hotels. He had found that there was very little shebeening in Cork, but he believed there would be more if the houses were closed on Sunday. That was rather strong evidence for a man interested in temperance. But, as I have said, I think the burden of proof lies on the promoters of this Bill, and it is for them to show there is a strong public demand for it. When the hon. Member for South Derry said there was an apathetic feeling in Ireland in regard to this matter he was giving away his case. This Bill goes further than that of 1878, which exempted five of the great towns, for it is now proposed to include those places; therefore, I urge that the burden of proof assuredly lies with its supporters as to the demand for Sunday Closing in those places. The demand really proceeds from honest-minded and conscientious fanatics, who think, however mistakenly, that the Bill will lead to temperance. We can prove that it leads to nothing of the kind. We have evidence that Cork, where Sunday Closing is not now in operation, is a temperate city, and has been so for generations, and we on these Benches contend that our efforts tend in the direction of temperance, in the progress of which we are as much interested as the supporters of this Bill. The hon. Member for South Derry, commenting on the evidence given before the Committee, said, that all through the official Report was in favour of Sunday Closing, and referred to District Inspectors and Resident Magistrates, and of many others who go towards making up the official hierarchy of Ireland. But we deny that the men he quoted are representative men, and we say that the Mayors of towns and cities, and the priests and others who come forward to give independent evidence, are more to be relied on for unbiased testimony than the official witnesses. I find, however, that Mr. O'Donnell, the Police Magistrate of

Dublin, who is one of the Magistrates who do not take their instructions from the Chief Secretary and who possess an amount of independence not found among the magistracy elsewhere, gave evidence that was strongly against Sunday Closing, believing it would lead to an increase of drinking and shebeen houses and bogus clubs, and other modes of secret indulgence in liquor, such as would be deplored by the promoters of the Bill. I do not go into the question whether Sunday closing has been a success in the country districts; but I know that in large numbers of country towns, where the front doors of the public house are shut, the back doors are open, and that a kind of amity prevails between the police and their natural enemies, the people who are to be found drinking together on the Sunday. I know that this has been frequently reported to me in my constituency, and I offer the fact for the consideration of the House; as to the great cities, in Dublin there are a certain number of bogus clubs, like those spoken of at Cardiff, and we say that if you close on Sundays the respectable houses, you will open the doors of shebeens and bogus clubs. If the people cannot get reasonable refreshments in the usual places they will go to worse drinking houses, as is shown by the evidence given before the Committee on the operation of the Welsh Act. The Report of that Committee shows that, in Cardiff, the general tenour of the evidence is to the effect that there is an improvement in the state of the main streets, but this does not extend to places outside the town, nor to the poorer and less conspicuous parts of that borough. The Rev. David Young says there is great improvement in the streets, but he is far from positive that it has not been gained at the expense of an increase of drink in private houses. The Rev. A. Gore gives evidence of a similar character, and so does the Rev. S. B. Wade. Inspector Evans, of Llanelly, says the streets are more orderly, but there has been more drunkenness amongst people returning from excursions. There is a large volume of evidence of this character with regard to the operation of the Acts in some of the principal towns of Wales. Summing up the Reports of the Committee, we have a set of figures of the most alarming character, which ought to make the advocates of this *quasi*-temperance legislation pause before pressing such measures on the country. Under the head of "Convictions for Drunkenness," the Committee compare the years between 1877 and 1881 with those between 1884 and 1888. They say there are nine county divisions, in six of which the Returns show a slight improvement, whilst in the remainder the result is unfavourable to the Act; and the same is the case in the boroughs of Cardiff, Neath, and Carmarthen. There is in the Report an immense volume of evidence dealing with the establishment of bogus clubs, and the means by which men obtain drink when it is denied to them in a legitimate way. On the old principle that forbidden fruit is the sweetest, there ought to be much to make the House hesitate to pass legislation of this kind. Houses that are enabled to supply refreshments on the Sunday are under the control of the Authorities. They are subject to Excise regulations, and to the control of the local police, and there is, consequently, a large amount of wholesome restraint exercised over them. When, however, such houses are closed, and you have substituted for them these hideous dens of drink and drunkenness, no check can possibly be enforced, and there is no guarantee that drink will not go on to an alarming extent. Mr. David James, a strong supporter of the Act, gave evidence before the Commission, and said that clubs sprang up immediately after the measure was put in force. Before 1883 these places never came under the notice of the police; but between 1883 and 1885 as many as 141 sprang into existence, and of these many were devoted entirely to the purposes of Saturday night and Sunday drinking. The Mayor of the populous borough of Swansea stated that no convictions with regard to clubs occurred until October, 1888; but in that year there were 33 convictions, while the Chief Constable declared that a large number of bogus clubs sprang into existence in Swansea, owing to the fact that the ordinary houses were closed. Well, Sir, we object to a measure which is likely to be attended with serious consequences of this kind being extended to Ireland. But, at any rate, if you do apply such a measure to Ireland, you must first obtain the opinions of the people most concerned. The manufactured opinion which is produced by my hon. Friends in favour of the Bill ought not to prevail against the views of the people who are directly interested in the question. If you close public houses during the present hours of opening, you must follow that to its logical conclusion, and deal with the wealthier classes. The working man is as fully entitled to reasonable refreshment as a member of the Carlton Club or the Reform Club. Unless you deal with the clubs as well as with the public-houses, this is class legislation of a most improper and unfair character. I do not believe for a moment that if the public houses were closed in the large towns of Ireland the cause of temperance would be thereby promoted. You may diminish temptations to drink in one respect; but beware that you do not place other temptations in the way of the people. The burden of proof lies on the supporters of this Bill, and they are bound to show that there is a large body of public opinion in its favour. How would an opinion in favour of the Bill be shown? By a demand for it. I should be prepared to re-consider this matter if it were submitted to the Irish Party as a whole, and if we had Local Bodies established capable of deciding the wants of the localities. The hon. Member for Meath, it seemed to me, rather went beyond the limits of ordinary debate in referring, as he did, to the opinions of the leaders of this Party; but in the point to which he referred I have had an opportunity of refreshing my mind, and I find that the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) followed a different course to that alleged. He was originally in favour of Sunday Closing, having voted for it here; but his experience in Ireland and elsewhere has led him to change his mind. But however that may be, the hon. Member for Cork, on the broad issue, holds that this is entirely a question to be settled by the Irish Representatives themselves, and not by many hon. Members in this House, who will vote for Sunday Closing in Ireland, but will not dare to vote for it in England, for fear of affronting a certain portion of their constituents. I say that the hon. Member who votes for Sunday Closing in Ireland, and takes an opposite view of the matter as affecting England, acts inconsistently and dishonestly. And yet there were some who took up that position on the last occasion, and I have no doubt there are some who will do so to-day. I would say to such Members, "If the thing is good, let us have it all round." Let us be guided by local opinions, and put the administration of the law in the hands of the Local Authorities. As to the meetings in favour of the Bill to which reference has been made, they have always been composed of professed friends of temperance—["Hear, hear!"]—let me finish the sentence—who belong to certain Associations, whose ultimate aim and object is to bring about the total suppression of the drink traffic, and who are altogether opposed to every kind of dealing with intoxicating liquor. I deny the right of these people to arrogate to themselves the title of exponents of public opinion on this Sunday Closing Question. The public in Ireland does not listen to them, and never means to. No doubt they can get up a large meeting in Cork, but only of their own party; and I would challenge them to point to a case where a meeting in reference to Sunday Closing has been held, and the public have been freely admitted, and resolutions in favour of this Bill have been carried. I take issue with the promoters of this measure at the very outset—on the question of broad principle. I would use against them the old argument—

> "If A and B take too much drink on the Sunday is that any reason why the men represented by the rest of the alphabet should be deprived of the opportunity of obtaining legitimate refreshment on that day, which is their natural right?"

I say that so far as popular opinion in Ireland is concerned, as expressed before Parliamentary Committees, it is not with the promoters of the Bill, but all the other way, the only supporters of this measure having been a few cranks and half-a-dozen teetotallers—and I submit that temperance does not necessarily imply teetotalism. The hon. Member for Meath drew a terrible picture of the evils arising from drunkenness, and I have no doubt that the majority of men in this House will join with him in denouncing those evils; but surely his picture would apply to other days of the week as well as Sunday. Is not drunkenness as bad on Wednesday or Thursday as on Sunday? Does it not produce as much demoralisation and as much suffering to wives and families? No doubt it does; therefore, I say it is unreasonable, for the sake of a Sabbatarian sentimentality, to punish the many for the shortcomings of a few. The question is, "Are you likely to promote temperance by this Bill?" I do not think you are, judging from experience of Sunday closing in Scotland and in Wales, and I, therefore, ask the House to hesitate before sending this legislation to Ireland. Above all, I would ask the House to remember that there has been no demand of a popular character from Ireland for this measure.

*(3.22.) The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, Dublin University): I rise to take part in this Debate and to support the Second Reading of the Bill, not as a Member of the Government, but as an Irish Member representing a constituency the overwhelming majority of which is in favour of the measure. That constituency, composed largely of members of the learned professions scattered throughout Ireland, has exceptional opportunities of forming an opinion on the subject of the traffic in intoxicating liquors. Members of my own profession become acquainted with one aspect of this question in Courts of Justice. Clergymen and medical men study it from other points of view. There is another reason why I desire to take part in this Debate. I had the honour of presiding over the Select Committee to which this Bill was referred, and I have thus been afforded an exceptional opportunity of acquiring a great deal of information on the subject. I must say I entered upon the inquiry with an open mind, but at its conclusion I had very definite views. I think the Committee over which I presided, and the House and the country, are to be congratulated on the fact that there were Members of that Committee who held strong views in opposition to those which I myself, at all events ultimately, adopted on the question of Sunday and Saturday Closing. There were two Members of the Committee—the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor) and the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. P. M'Donald) who has addressed the House—who took a very active part in the labours of that Committee in opposition to Sunday Closing—and the consequence was that every possible information on their side of the question which could be obtained was secured; and what was the result? I do not desire to refer in detail to the evidence that was given before the Committee; but hon. Gentlemen who have examined that evidence will, I think, agree that there was an almost unanimous expression of opinion in favour of this Bill on the part of witnesses from every class of society to which you would naturally appeal on this question. You would naturally appeal to the clerical profession. Well, the Church to which I belong, and the leading Bishops of the Roman Catholics and the vast majority of the clergy of all denominations, are in favour of it. We also had strong evidence in the same direction from the medical profession, and from persons entitled to speak on behalf of the working classes, of employers, and of representatives of every class; and we had another kind of evidence which appeared to me to be of great value, and that was the evidence of what were called the official witnesses. In some of the questions put and observations made by Members of the Committee there was an attempt made to discount the evidence of these official witnesses—I mean of the representatives of the police and Resident Magistrates. Now, with regard to the police, I will, as I am not now speaking as a Member of the Government, make an admission, which I hope hon. Members opposite will not be so ungenerous as to use against me on another occasion. I will admit that the police are merely human. If, acting on this admission, we are to impute to them selfish motives, you may attribute the police evidence in favour of the Bill to the selfish consideration on their part that if the Bill is passed there will be less drunkenness and, consequently, less work for them to do. Well, the system that gives the police the least trouble in regard to drunkenness is exactly that which will commend itself to the House. At any rate, the police, whose inclination I will assume to lead them to support what will diminish their work and trouble, gave strong evidence in favour of Sunday Closing and of early Saturday Closing. As regards the position I took up in reference to the Report of the Committee, I wish, shortly, to state what my attitude was. It was my duty, as Chairman of the Select Committee, to submit

a draft Report. I did submit a draft Report, and in essential particulars the draft I submitted is the Report which was adopted, with one exception, and that an important one, no doubt. I came to the conclusion, upon the whole of the evidence, that there was not that overwhelming mass of public opinion in favour of total Sunday Closing in the five cities and towns which had been exempted from the operation of the original Act which was proved to exist in respect of the rest of Ireland. I came to that conclusion mainly upon the evidence which was given in respect to Dublin and Cork. I think, myself, that if it were possible to deal separately with Belfast, the evidence pointed to the existence in Belfast of a feeling in favour of total Sunday Closing in that city, which might justify an extension of the Act to Belfast in its entirety; but obviously it would not have been a very tenable position to legislate separately for one of the great cities. I will not now give in detail the reasons which appeared to justify the separate treatment of the larger towns on the principle accepted in 1878. These I reserve for the Committee stage of this Bill. I thought, on the whole, that the best recommendation I could submit to the Select Committee was to make the Act of 1878 perpetual as regarded the entire of Ireland, with the exception of the five cities which were already exempted from that Act, and in respect of those cities to adopt the suggestion laid before the Committee by many eminent authorities connected with those places, namely, to shorten the hours during which public houses might legally remain open, that is to say, to allow them to remain open from 2 to 5 o'clock instead of from 2 o'clock to 7 o'clock, as the law stands at present. It was on that point alone that my Report differed from the Report adopted by the majority of the Committee, and I am bound to say that subsequent consideration has not altered the opinion I then formed. In this opinion, as regards Dublin, I am supported by the Recorder of Dublin, who, as all hon. Members who know him will admit, has at heart the interest of the people of the great city in respect to which he exercises important functions, and whom it is fair to class as an advocate of temperance views, although he takes no active part in public movements of the kind. The evidence given to the Committee by the Recorder of Dublin, and the opinion expressed by him, was against the wisdom of attempting, at all events for the present, this total change in the habits of a great city; but he was strongly in favour of early closing on Saturday night, and of reducing the number of hours during which public houses might remain open on Sunday. Mr. O'Donel, the chief police magistrate in Dublin, whose opinion on this subject is entitled to respect, gave similar evidence. On the whole, that was the opinion which I adopted, and to which I still adhere. I hope that the Bill will be read a second time; and, in that event, I shall in Committee endeavour to give practical effect to the views which I have expressed. I believe that such an amendment of the Bill may be generally accepted as a settlement of this question. It is time that the question should be settled. It must be borne in mind that you are not asked to try an experiment as regards Sunday Closing. Sunday Closing has been in general operation in Ireland since 1878, and the evidence in its favour is overwhelming, indeed it nearly approaches unanimity. I do not approach the question from any fanatical or extreme point of view. I look upon the traffic in alcoholic liquors as a perfectly lawful and legitimate trade. I should be extremely hypocritical and insincere if I took up any other position, because I am a consumer—I hope a moderate consumer—of alcoholic liquor. I could not for a moment take up the position that the trade in an article which I consume is to be regarded as something accursed or unclean; but the House has, by a long course of legislation, properly treated this trade as one which requires very careful guarding in the interests of the community, because it is a trade in an article that is the source of very great danger to many; because the excessive use or the misuse of this article leads to consequences more terrific than the use or misuse of any article of general use supplied by any other trade. To that extent I go with those who are called temperance reformers. But then, if you adopt my view, the question is not an abstract question of right or wrong; it is a question of what is best under the circumstances of the case, and it is from this point of view that I approach it. The position of the question in Ireland is essentially different from the position in England. I should have said before the passing of the Sunday Closing Act of 1878, from my knowledge of the habits of the Irish people, that they were not at all likely, under a system of Sunday Closing, to bring home intoxicating liquors and to consume them to excess in their own houses. That is a danger which was gravely apprehended by many who were conscientiously opposed to the passing of the original Sunday Closing Act; but the result of the Committee's examination proves that the fear entertained on this score was without foundation. The Irish people are sociable and convivial in their habits. They are fond of indulging in a custom of treating one another all round, a custom that is only possible while public houses are open; and I believe it is largely due to that custom, more than to the deliberate bringing home of intoxicating liquors, that excessive drinking prevails to any considerable extent in Ireland. Now, if there is in Ireland practical unanimity on the subject of Sunday Closing, there is a nearer approach to absolute unanimity on the subject of Saturday Closing. What you want to do is to protect the masses of the people against danger in connection with a traffic which I, at all events, accept as legitimate if properly safeguarded and properly used. The danger to the working classes is greatest on Saturday night to those who have received their wages on that day, and who, having their pockets full of money, are tempted to indulge to excess in convivial habits by the open public house. I think experience shows that the evil is done on Saturday night, and, in my opinion, you commence too late when you close the public houses on Sunday. These are the views which commend themselves to the overwhelming majority of all classes in Ireland, as testified by the evidence brought before the Select Committee. It has been remarked that some persons who hold representative positions in Ireland gave evidence, as far as they were individually concerned, in opposition to Sunday Closing and early closing on Saturday. I refer to some Mayors of cities and towns who were examined before the Committee. These gentlemen may represent their municipalities on some questions; but it cannot be pretended that they represent them on the question of Sunday Closing. As to their testimony, there is an important kind of evidence which they might have given if it had been forthcoming—I mean as to any public expression of opinion on the part of the inhabitants of their towns. It is remarkable, however, that those gentlemen gave no evidence of any public meetings in the towns they represented, or of any public demonstrations, in opposition to Sunday closing. On the contrary, when asked the opinion of the people in the towns, they were extremely guarded. The junior Member for Cork City (Mr. Maurice Healy) was examined before the Committee, and gave some remarkable evidence. He called the franchise that exists in most of the Irish municipal towns a publican's franchise, and pointed out that there was a most active Association operating in each of those towns for the protection of the interests of the trade. He said also that when a candidate, whose views were generally in accord with those of the electors, was put forward by that active body there was no particular reason why he should not be accepted. These facts at once destroy the force of any argument based upon the representative character of those Mayors who gave evidence in opposition to the Act. Hon. Members who oppose this Bill have, of course, been returned to this House; but I should like to know whether there is a single hon. Member from Ireland on either side of the House who has been returned on what, in the political slang of the day, I may call the anti-Sunday Closing ticket? If there be such a Member I think that he would be entitled to say, "I hold a representative position upon this question." Of course, the opinion of hon. Members is entitled to respect; but the fact that they have been returned by certain constituencies cannot be taken as an indication that they represent the views of the majority of their constituents on this point, unless this question was brought before the electors in some shape or form. The hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. P. M'Donald), with the candour I expected from him, tendered his thanks on behalf of the trade to certain Members on both sides of the House for having done their utmost to prevent this Bill coming on for discussion. I must congratulate the hon. Gentlemen upon representing a body so disinterested as he has shown the traders to be by his speech on this occasion. They oppose this measure, which, according to the view of their admitted representative, will lead to the most enormous increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquors in Ireland. The hon. Member quoted statistics as to shebeening in Glasgow, and asked, "Do you wish to reduce Ireland to the terrible condition of Glasgow?" That condition ought, from the pecuniary point of view, to be exceedingly gratifying to the trade on behalf of which the hon. Member tendered his thanks to the opponents of this Bill, although I have no doubt it would not be gratifying to himself personally.

*MR. P. M'DONALD: I spoke quite as much in a moral direction as in the interests of the trade. I may also add that I should be a gainer by an increase in the illicit traffic, inasmuch as I have no connection with the retail trade.

*MR. MADDEN: I say, in all sincerity, that I have no doubt the hon. Member would greatly deprecate the consequences to which he referred. But I was pointing out to the House that the attitude of the trade in this matter is singularly disinterested, inasmuch as they oppose a Bill which they say would lead to a large increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquors. There is, moreover, a slight inconsistency between the hon. Gentleman's argument and the statement made in his Amendment, because the latter declares that the Bill, if passed, would injure the trade, while the former goes to prove that it would largely increase its profits. I shall give my cordial support to the Second Reading of the Bill. I intend, in due course, to place upon the Paper the Amendment to which I have referred, and I sincerely hope that hon. Members from all parts of the United Kingdom, recognising the peculiar position occupied by this question in Ireland, will enable us to arrive at a final and satisfactory settlement—a settlement which, as Chairman of the Committee, I have means of knowing will be cordially accepted, and endorsed by the overwhelming majority of Irishmen, absolutely irrespective of class, creed, or politics.

(4.52.) MR. J. O'CONNOR: I think the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman in part justifies the position we have taken up on this matter, and it seems to me that the supporters of the Bill have reason to feel some dissatisfaction with his attitude. He has cut from under their feet the main ground on which they stand. He states, as the result of the Committee's investigation, that he would not feel justified in extending the Sunday Closing Act to the five excluded cities, and he is going to give effect to that statement by moving an Amendment in Committee. He asks us to accept this as a compromise, and to assent to the Second Reading of the Bill. I cannot accept any compromise with a Party which does not recognise the first condition of a compromise, namely, finality. Will the promoters of the Bill say they will accept the right hon. Gentleman's offer as a settlement? No, Sir. On the contrary, they will insist that the ground gained to-day shall be made the basis of further attack on the position to-morrow. The right hon. Gentleman attacks the representative character of the Mayors who gave evidence before the Committee. I demand for those gentlemen the same representative character as Members of this House demand for themselves. They, undoubtedly, had no mandate to represent their townsmen before the Committee. What mandate have the supporters of this Bill? None whatever. On the contrary, the people of Ireland have, at the present moment, put under foot every contention but that of the attainment of the legislative independence of the country, and they have returned to this House Gentlemen to give effect to that contention. I regret to see that many of my hon. Friends are using the position they have been placed in for that purpose in order to further a purpose that was never in the minds of their constituents. Such conduct is a piece of political irregularity which none but a teetotaller would be guilty of. The right hon. Gentleman made fun of my hon. Friend the Member for Sligo (Mr. P. M'Donald) because he objects to the increase of drink. My hon. Friend objects to the character of drinking that will result from the passage of this Bill. I deny the right of the supporters of legislation of this character to monopolise the desire to advance the cause of temperance. My contention has always been that they are going the wrong way to promote the object they have in view. The Welsh Commission said in the course of their Report—

> "Had it been our duty to advise on the form of the original legislation, we might have suggested that some facilities should have been given for obtaining drink in small quantities for domestic consumption."

The Commissioners are, therefore, of opinion that the lines on which you are now moving are wrong, and lead to a result directly the reverse of that which you have in view. My hon. Friend the Member for Meath (Mr. Mahony), in the course of his very able and oratorical speech, appealed to the House in the most pathetic manner on behalf of those who are made widows and orphans, and those who are impoverished owing to the indulgence in drink of those on whom they are dependent. I, too, might appeal to the House on the very same grounds. I might appeal for the wife of the man who gets drunk in a club or shebeen, where there is no restriction of time or amount, and where no care is taken respecting the quality of the drink. I might appeal for the poor orphans who are made so by the fact that men are poisoned by the liquor supplied in low clubs and shebeens, and I might turn round and say to the Member for Meath, "I can rant as well as thou." It was a high rhetorical flourish on my hon. Friend's part, but there was no argument whatever in it. My hon. Friend said the Select Committee was appointed at our request. I admit that we asked for a Committee. We asked for a Select Committee, and we got a very select Committee. We got a Committee on which there were nine Members who were either absolutely declared teetotallers, or supporters of the teetotal cause. There were six Members who did not so declare, and I should like to know how it was possible for the Committee to come to any other conclusion. We were sneered at because when the Report was submitted only two opposed it, and the hon. Member asserted that the rest of the Committee supported it. But, on looking into the matter, I find that there were only six other Members there. Four were absent. And why? Because throughout the proceedings of the Committee the minority had been so overborne by the tyrant majority that it became absolutely useless for them to take any part at all. The Attorney General for Ireland went into the Select Committee with a predilection in favour of Sunday Closing, yet, notwithstanding that, he was obliged by the force of evidence to recommend to the Committee that Sunday Closing should not be extended to the exempted cities. What did the tyrant majority do? Did they accept the draft of the hon. and learned Gentleman's Report? Nothing of the kind. They swept it ruthlessly aside, and sent another Report to the House. And yet this is said to be the Report of an "impartial Committee" as it has been called by the Chief Secretary. I impeach the Committee—it was a packed jury. So much for the Select Committee, whose Report was referred to by the hon. Member for Meath. But that was not the only mistake made by my hon. Friend. I think he was very injudicious in referring to the attitude of the leader of the Party to which we belong. He said the hon. Member for Cork would not come here to oppose this Bill. He said that without knowledge, and I hope he was under a misapprehension. He also said that the hon. Member for Cork held a perfectly neutral position in regard to this matter. Surely he cannot be aware of what the hon. Member for Cork said on this matter two years ago. At the end of the Session of 1888 the hon. Member for Cork, in the course of one of his speeches, said that he originally entered Parliament as a supporter of Sunday Closing, but having watched the different phases of the question, both in England and in Ireland, he had come to the conclusion that the true interests of temperance were not likely to be advanced by the way in which the Sunday Closing measure was put forward; that it was attended with greater evils than those which it sought to cure, and that the effect of the Sunday Closing Act of 1874 was not such as was likely to increase the desire of the people of Ireland for temperance, or to induce them to adopt temperance habits. Again, the hon. Member said—

> "I am firmly convinced that measures proceeding from the House for the promotion of temperance will not have any chance of fair play in Ireland, and the backs of the people are put up against them in advance. That there will be defects in the administration which will largely nullify the intentions of the Legislature in passing such measures, and that the result, so far as the spreading of temperance is concerned, will be disappointing to those advocates of temperance who have proved their good faith and earnestness by their constant advocacy of it, both in this country and in Ireland."

Finally the hon. Member for Cork said—

> "If you pass the Bill you will grievously hamper the efforts of social reformers in Ireland; you will prejudice them with a section of the Irish people, many of whom desire legislation going beyond the limits of this Bill, and you will increase the strength of that section which represents the spirit trade in Ireland. I believe from the bottom of my heart that no greater blow could be dealt against temperance in Ireland than the passing of such a measure."

This, Sir, was the language of the hon. Member for Cork, who later on in the same speech said—

> "I am a temperance man, and I believe as strongly as the hon. Member who introduced the Bill that one of our great works in the future must be to make the Irish people more sober than they are. That is a matter of vital importance, and I am convinced that only can you secure the spread of temperance among the people by voluntary action among themselves and by their own representatives. For these reasons I decline to take the responsibility on the present occasion of voting for this measure."

I trust, Sir, that the extracts I have read show that my hon. Friend had no right to say he spoke on behalf of his leader.

*Mr. PIERCE MAHONY: I beg my hon. Friend's pardon. I never professed to speak on behalf of my leader. I gave what I believed to be the opinion of the hon. Member for Cork; and I maintain, even after what my hon. Friend has read, that the hon. Member for Cork is in a position of neutrality.

(4.12) Mr. J. O'CONNOR: Can the speaker of the words I have read be said to occupy a neutral position? I am sure my hon. Friend was not entitled to assume what he did on this point, and I object to the position of the leader of our own Party being thus misrepresented. I will now pass away from that point. The Attorney General for Ireland said that the bulk of the evidence offered before the Committee was in favour of Sunday Closing, and the hon. Member for South Derry made a similar assertion. I traverse those statements, and I shall be obliged to read to the House the evidence of clergymen, of medical men, and of working men; of Mayors of cities and towns, of Town Councillors, and of those who had presided at meetings, which now are denied to have been held. Did not the Mayor and Corporation of Dublin oppose the Bill? Was not a similar attitude taken up by the Civic Authorities of Cork, Limerick, and Waterford? Have not petitions against the Bill been presented to this House? Sir, I submit the evidence was so strong in our favour that it compelled the Attorney General to bring in a Report against his own predilections. We summoned the Mayors of eight cities and towns, in four of which the Sunday Closing Act was in operation. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill referred to the evidence of the Mayor of Derry. Why did he not refer to the evidence of the Mayors of three other excepted cities? Because those gentlemen agreed that it would be to the interest of the cause of temperance if the Act were not extended to those cities. The gentlemen were elected to their posts by people who knew the wants and wishes of the public.

Mr. M. HEALY (Cork City): The £10 franchise.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: A short time ago a Bill was introduced for the purpose of lowering the franchise in Belfast, but hon. Members for Ireland declined to accept the principle so far as the cities in the south were concerned.

Mr. M. HEALY: No, no.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: Only seven members of the Irish Party voted for the Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! All this is perfectly irrelevant.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: That Amendment of the hon. Member for Longford was rejected. The franchise is low enough, the majority of the Town Councils, in nearly every instance, are Nationalist and democratic throughout the South of Ireland. What is the use of talking of a £10 franchise? It is simply drawing a red herring across the trail of my argument. We do not want a lowered franchise. It is not absolutely necessary; nearly every householder has a vote. I shall support such a proposal when it comes forward, but I mean it does not affect the representative character of Mayors and Corporations in the South of Ireland. My hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. M. Healy) my inexperienced *savant* Friend lives up on the top of a mountain, like *Teufelsdröckh*, alone with the stars. He passes down through the city to his office; his keen powers of observation I do not doubt, but I doubt whether he exercises them by intercourse with the people he represents; I doubt it very much. Therefore, I take the opinion of the Mayor of Cork for the time being as that of a better guide to the wants and wishes of the democracy of Cork than my learned but inexperienced *savant* Friend. What is the opinion, the representative opinion, in those cities to which the Act extends? Mr. McHugh, in reference to Sligo, expresses an opinion opposed to the closing at 9 o'clock on Saturday, and he says that after the market for the surrounding district is over there is still much left to be done in this town of 11,000 inhabitants. He recommends the partial opening of public-houses on Sunday. The Mayor of Kilkenny recommends that there should be opening for a few hours on Sunday. The Mayor of Clonmel desires a change in the practice of total closing on Sunday, because, as he says, it is better that the people should go to the respectable houses instead of resorting to the low-class houses, when the stuff procured makes the people mad. These are the opinions of Mayors in those cities already under the operation of the Sunday Closing Act, and now I come to a few quotations from the representative Authorities in those cities where the Act is not in operation, and to which it is suggested the Act should be extended. Mr. Alderman John O'Brien, being asked his opinion as to the desirability of extending the Act to Cork, replies, "In my opinion it is not desirable."

*Mr. LEA: Will the hon. Member refer to the next two questions?

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: Certainly. Asked as to the modification of existing hours, he says—"I am in favour of opening for a few hours on Sunday;" and then, in answer to a question as to Saturdays, he says—"I am very strongly in favour of a modification of the hours." Now, it is in the hands of hon. Members to refer to this evidence when it comes to their turn to speak, and I shall not stand in their way for long. I am dealing now with the branch of the subject which refers to Sunday Closing. When I come to the Saturday Closing part I shall have strong evidence to put before the House. Now I come to the evidence of Mr. Thomas O'Toole, the Mayor of Waterford. He told the Committee of a Resolution passed against the extension of the Act, and expressed his opinion that the effect of the extension would be to encourage drinking in the low public houses. Again, in reference to Limerick, we have evidence supporting a strong opinion against the extension of the Act to that city. The Mayor said that, although for two months the knowledge that he had been summoned to give evidence was before the public, he had received no intimation of opinion expressed in favour of curtailing the hours, but, on the contrary, all expressions of opinion had been the other way. Some of the representative men in these exempted cities stand aghast at the proposed alteration. These are men responsible for the good order and government of the town, and anxious for the development of trade and social progress in the community they govern. Will the House pass a measure like this in the face of such opinions as are expressed throughout this evidence? The proposal of this measure does not come from the representatives of local feeling; it comes principally from the Association having the promotion of such measures for its object, and which is supported by faddists and fanatics, more anxious for the establishment of an idea than the true welfare of the people in whom they affect to have such interest. Now, references have been made to the action of the police, and regrets have been expressed that prosecutions under the Act have not been more frequent. The Attorney General, in his fascinating speech, said the feeling of the police was in favour of an alteration in the law, which would make their position more easy. Now, what we object to is not prosecution but persecution. We contend that every time you strengthen this law you put into the hands of the willing police additional power for persecuting the people of Ireland. We had police and magisterial evidence before the Committee. I will not read so much as I had intended, for

I will endeavour to keep my word not to delay the House, but the odium heaped upon our side of this question requires some exposition. Here is the evidence of a Resident Magistrate, which is very indicative of the rest. Let the House look at the evidence of Mr. Hamilton, on page 200. This witness said he was in favour of the total abolition of the *bonâ fide* Traveller Clause, substituting for it a clause providing that only those should obtain drink who had slept in the house the night before, or who intended to sleep in the house that night. Further, Mr. Hamilton goes on to recommend that, to guard against evasions of the law, publicans should be prevented from receiving guests on Sunday. So this gentleman would not only deprive persons of the means of obtaining necessary refreshment while travelling, but would actually deny to one class of traders the means of friendly intercourse on Sunday! In all other positions in society you may receive visits from your friends, but the unfortunate publican is to be the only person who is to be denied the gratification of indulging in the ordinary amenities of social life. This is the police opinion in Ireland, that on Sundays the inhabitants are to be shut up like the police in barracks. Taking into account the spirit we know influences the police too often, have we not too much reason to expect that, simply out of a spirit of petty persecution, they would make continual domiciliary visits on the excuse of suspicion of drinking going on? Many publicans in Ireland carry on other businesses, and, for the convenience of customers living at a distance, supply goods on Sundays after Mass, and an opportunity for persecution by the police is opened simply because a man may have called on the way to or from Mass to pay a bill. More power is the desire of the police. When they have failed to carry out the intention of the Legislature by judicious application of existing law, they ask for more authority. What are we here for? What is Parliament assembled for but to interpose its strong hand between the people and the undue operation of a stringent law? I ask this House, and I ask my Colleagues especially, are they going to place the Irish people still more in the hands of an unmerciful and prostituted Irish police? I must trouble the House by reference to evidence, without which my case would be incomplete. The right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Madden) said evidence from the working classes was received before the Committee, but why did he not quote the evidence of Mr. Manetti, the president of the Dublin Trades Association, or the evidence of Mr. Crean? Mr. Manetti described how the Association gives expression to the views of the working classes upon all trade and social questions, and he showed how, in a meeting in which delegates from all trades were present, a resolution condemning these proposals for Saturday and Sunday Closing was carried with unanimity. Then, again, Mr. Crean told us how the trades' representatives of Cork passed a resolution against Sunday Closing, and forwarded copies of the resolution to the Members for Cork, the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary, and Mr. Gladstone. I pass over much that I have marked for quotation on this point, the extension of the Act to the exempted cities. Much stress has been laid on the opinion of the Bishops, and I must make a reference to this. Seven Bishops only recommended the extension of the Act, or were in favour of the present Act, and two were totally opposed to the principle of the Bill. Priests and Bishops, who are responsible for the direction of the morals of the people, are divided in opinion. I had intended to quote largely from official evidence with regard to shebeens and drinking clubs in large cities. It has been pointod out by the Welsh Commission how these clubs, so called, have become a great scandal in some towns, particularly in Cardiff, and this Bill will have the effect of fostering the evil in towns similar to Cardiff, and among populations where the danger is much greater. We can prove, on the evidence, these dangers have arisen. There were put into my hands to-day, by the Mayor of Cork, who happens to be in London, Returns showing the number of arrests in Cork for drunkenness in the interval between January 1st and April 20th. For drunkenness on Sundays, 28 persons were arrested, or an average of seven per month, in a population of 80,000. The average is greater on Saturday, being 29, but these were largely composed of prostitutes. Now, I ask, are we called upon to re-cast the law, subjecting the rest of the population to great inconvenience, for the sake of keeping these seven people per month sober on Sundays? It is a monstrous proposition. In a populous city like Cork, where the working classes make proper use of the public houses, are they to be deprived of the privilege of taking a glass of beer, in order that seven people per month may be kept out of the Bridewell? Putting aside the rest of my extracts, for I fear I have occupied too much time, let me say, in conclusion, that I oppose this Bill because I fear that it will create evils far greater than those it is intended to cure. I have no fear of respectable public houses. I would control public houses, as I have said before, from cellar to chimney top, and if I were asked to devise a system which would encourage sobriety it would be on lines very different to those in this Bill. It may be that in this House, or elsewhere, such a measure may be introduced. I am anxious for the sobriety of the people, and I am satisfied that the people will be in safe hands when the trade is conducted by responsible persons, whose business it is to sell refreshments, and not poisonous drink, and who will carry on their business within legal lines, laid down with knowledge of the just requirements of the people. I appeal to English and Scotch Members who profess the principle of Home Rule not to act in opposition to that principle by forcing this legislation upon Ireland, and I appeal to my fellow countrymen and colleagues to leave this matter to the opinion of our people whose social well-being is concerned.

(4.58.) Mr. M. HEALY: I must at once repudiate the claim put forward by one of my hon. Friends, the Member for North Cork (Mr. Flynn), to speak on behalf of the bulk of the Irish representatives. I grant there is some difference of opinion among Irish Members as to this Bill, and I regret that fact. I admit that the opponents of the Bill have derived considerable advantage from the declaration of my hon. Colleague and Leader that he desires to preserve an attitude of neutrality upon this question. But, while making these concessions, I claim that if this measure could be submitted to Irish Representatives alone, and their opinion were taken, uninfluenced by any outward considerations, there would be a large majority in favour of the Bill. I regret there should be this difference of opinion, and that I should find myself differing in what is unquestionably a very important matter from some of my colleagues, for whose opinions on this and other subjects I have very great respect. For my part I would have been content, as the hon. Member for Meath declared earlier, that this matter should lie in abeyance until happier circumstances should enable us to have a decision from Irish opinion alone, but my hon. Friend, rashly taking upon himself to question our political competency to express an opinion on this subject, says this is not an issue upon which we were elected. Now, I ask my hon. Friend that question often asked when controversies arise, "who began it?" My hon. Friend is the Member who deliberately and advisedly urged this bold proceeding upon us. I think he would have been well advised to let sleeping dogs lie, and that he will find in the result that the interests he represents have not been served by his representations. For my part I return my hon. Friend and the Irish vintners my hearty thanks for having set my hands free in this matter; but I will not join in any indiscriminate attack upon the publicans of Ireland, the majority of whom are sincere and honest supporters of the political Party to which I belong, while many of them have suffered cruel and grievous wrong and persecution at the hands of the Government for the opinions they have held. But the opponents of the Bill are more zealous for the interests of the publicans than the publicans themselves. I shall never forget that before the Sunday Closing Act was in force in Ireland the publicans in two or three parts of the country voluntarily closed their houses on Sunday at the request of their spiritual advisers, and I would remind my hon. Friend, who thinks he has a higher claim than I have to represent the people on this question, that he is Member for one of the very districts in which Sunday Closing prevailed even before the passing of the Sunday Closing Act for Ireland. The same thing happened in the County of

Tipperary. I will now say a few words with regard to the Bill itself. It makes three distinct proposals. In the first place, it proposes to make perpetual the existing Sunday Closing Act in the rural districts; in the second place, it proposes to extend that Act to the urban communities at present excluded from its operation; and, in the third place, it proposes to close the public-houses in Ireland at 9 o'clock on Saturday night instead of 11 o'clock, the hour at which they are now closed in the large cities, or 10 o'clock, which is the hour of closing in other places. Now, with reference to these three objects, there is only one which is seriously in dispute. There is no one who seriously proposes to abrogate or repeal the Sunday Closing Act. To do that would be nothing less than to lapse into barbarism, and no proposal of the kind has ever emanated from any person except those who are more or less directly connected with the trade. Moreover, I venture to tell my hon. Friend that if there were for a moment any serious danger of the House being called upon to repeal the existing Sunday Closing Act in Ireland, he would quickly find that those who now advise him would not long be content to remain silent under such a state of things. The real objection is to the extension of the existing system to the five exempted towns. My hon. Friend says that the burden of proof in favour of the extension of the Act to these places lies with the promoters of this Bill; but we say, on the other hand, that the burden of proof lies on the other side. It was they who deliberately selected the tribunal before which the question was to be tried, the Select Committee by whom it was considered having been appointed, not at our suggestion, but at that of the hon. Gentlemen who oppose this Bill. Well, that Committee has decided against them, and that very fact has shifted the burden of proof to the shoulders of our opponents, on whom it now lies to show that the Committee, in recommending the extension of the Act to the five exempted cities, has acted unwisely. My hon. Friend has stated that that Committee was packed, and the only proof he has given of the truth of that serious charge is that the Report is not in his favour. Reference was also made to the

Mr. M. Healy

Whips who manipulated the alleged packing, and my hon. Friend the Member for Sligo (Mr. P. M'Donald) has told us that everybody knows how this sort of thing is done—"the Whips arrange it." Does the hon. Member mean to say that my deceased Friend, Mr. Biggar, acted otherwise than with the strictest impartiality in the selection of that Committee? I am perfectly sure that, zealous opponent of the Bill as the hon. Gentleman is, he would think twice before advancing such a charge. Although my late Friend Mr. Biggar, whose assistance on this occasion we sorely miss, was a strong supporter of the measure, he nevertheless, in the part he took in the appointment of the Committee, acted with the most scrupulous impartiality. When called upon to select the Irish Members he chose the hon. Members for Tipperary and Sligo, who were known to take strong views against the Bill, and, in addition to them, he selected two hon. Members who were supposed to be supporters of the Sunday closing movement. When my hon. Friend says the Committee was packed, I ask him whether it was packing to put upon the Committee an equal number of gentlemen representing both sides of the question? This is what the charge of packing really comes to, and it is an instance of the lengths to which my hon. Friend will go in the endeavour to enforce his arguments. The hon. Gentleman did not adduce any facts in support of the charge, and I would recommend him to be more careful in making such charges. My hon. Friend has cited the evidence of a considerable number of witnesses who gave evidence in support of his Bill. This interesting process was adopted, at an earlier stage, as regards the Welsh Sunday Closing, by my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Cork. Why does this House appoint Select Committees? To save the trouble of itself taking evidence. The Committee hear different statements on each side, and, like a jury, they come to a conclusion as to which is right and which is wrong. I, for my part, decline to wade through the evidence; I accept the Report of the Committee; and I do not think that any one will say that the result of the labours of these two Committees may not be taken. I decline to go so far afield as Scotland

and Wales; and I think my hon. Friend the Member for Sligo will waste his eloquence for a very long time in this House before he succeeds in convincing the majority of Scotch and Welsh Members that Sunday Closing should be abrogated in their respective countries. I have been condemned for not representing the feelings of my constituents on this subject. Two years ago, when this subject was introduced, the very first thing I did was to ascertain the feelings and wishes of my constituents. My hon. Friend himself has said that he would be disposed to pay great deference to the wishes and feelings of the Irish clergy. I perfectly agree with him in that. The very first thing I did in Cork was to find what were the wishes and feelings of the clergy. It may surprise my hon. Friend to learn that 95 per cent. of the clergy of Cork signed a Memorial in favour of Sunday Closing in Cork and early closing on Saturdays. My hon. Friend may say if he likes that I do not represent the wishes and feelings of my constituents, but I think he will admit that, on a question of this kind, which is largely moral and religious, the wishes and feelings of the Irish people may very well be represented by their spiritual guides. I was not content with getting this information and a Memorial signed, but I did what the Victuallers' Association of Cork did not dare to do, or, at any rate, what they did not attempt to do, I held a public meeting in the City of Cork of the supporters of this Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for North-East Cork has sneered at the men in broadcloth who were on the platform, but he knows that the meeting was held in the Assembly Room, the largest building which can be obtained in which to hold a meeting, and he will understand the import of what I say when I tell him that the body of the hall was filled by working men, who unanimously declared in favour of Sunday Closing. I now come to what I consider is vastly the most important proposal of this Bill, namely, the proposal to close public-houses early on Saturday night. On that subject there is no serious difference of opinion in Ireland. Witness after witness before the Select Committee declared in favour of cutting down the hours of sale on the Saturday night. My hon. Friend has referred to the Mayor of Cork, Mr. John O'Brien, a gentleman for whom we on these Benches have the very greatest respect, who declared in favour of closing public-houses earlier on Saturday nights; and he also referred to Mr. Crean, President of the Trades' Council, who, for some reason which I do not understand, came over and gave evidence against Sunday and Saturday closing, but who on his return gave notice of a Motion in favour of Saturday closing. I believe that if the whole of Ireland were polled to-morrow on the question of Saturday night closing, the people of Ireland would declare in favour of it by 50 to 1. I think the publicans of Ireland are stopped from opposing Saturday night closing, because they were the first inventors of it. When this whole question was agitated 10 or 15 years ago, the publicans said—

> "You are going the wrong way about to procure temperance in Ireland. You are a wretched set of Sabbatarians. All you need do is to close public-houses on Saturday nights. That is the proper way to attain your object."

But now, when that is proposed, they are just as hostile to it as they were to Sunday Closing. We have been told of the enormous mischief which will arise from shebeens. We had some very lugubrious prophecies when the Sunday Closing Act was originally proposed, but we have not found that they have come to anything. I, for my part, can see no difference whatever between getting drunk in public-houses and in shebeens. My hon. Friend seems to think that if it is done in a public-house it is in some way sanctified; that so long as the licensed trader measures out the drink no harm is done, but that it is a dreadful crime when it is committed in shebeens. That is one of the many contradictions which my hon. Friend has fallen into. Without taking up more of the time of the House I wish to express my satisfaction that hon. Members are now permitted to come to a decision on this question. This year is to be signalised by a great temperance movement in Ireland. It is the centenary of the movement originated by Father Matthews, and the Bishops and clergy of Ireland seem resolved to make one great and final effort to complete the work begun by that great man in Ireland. They intend to lay deep and wide the foundations of a great temperance movement in that country. In my opinion, this House can perform no more worthy and noble act than to co-operate in every way in their power in that great temperance movement.

*(5.26.) Mr. LEA rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

*(5.27.) MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Sir, there was what is called a unanimous feeling in Ireland in favour of Sunday Closing, and the Attorney General recommend English and Scotch Members to acquiesce and abstain from opposing the Bill. As a Member of the Committee, I venture to express a doubt as to the unanimity of Irishmen in favour of this measure. Some portions of the evidence, to my mind, indicated that there was a widespread though latent opinion against it, and I claim for English and Scotch Members the right to exercise an independent judgment upon the Bill. I wish also to know from the right hon. and learned Gentleman for Ireland what are his grounds for thinking that this Bill will be accepted as a final settlement of the question?

Mr. BARING rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

(5.28.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to say if this had been a proposal to maintain the *status quo* by a continuance of the Sunday Closing Act I should not have opposed the Bill. But as this is a proposal to initiate a fresh course of restrictive legislation upon social questions, I feel bound to take up the attitude of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork, the leader of the Irish Party, who when he last spoke on this subject said Irish social questions of this kind ought to be reserved to be dealt with by an Irish authority. I shall, therefore, vote against the Bill.

(5.30.) Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and agreeed to.

Mr. M. Healy

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 242; Noes 78.—(Div. List, No. 56.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

WOMEN'S DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 198.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolutions [22nd April] [see pages 1084, 1098, and 1101] reported, and agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to prepare and bring in a Bill upon the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 18th instant, and then agreed to by the House, That they do make provision therein pursuan to the said Resolutions.

PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND) (OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION) BILL.—(No. 140.)

Read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

EXCHEQUER BONDS (CAPE RAILWAY.

Ordered—

"That the Copy of Account of Exchequer Bonds payable in the year ending the 31st day of March, 1891, unprovided for, which was presented upon the 22nd day of this instant April, be referred to the Committee of Supply."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

MOTIONS.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS' DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Bill to remove the Disabilities affecting Members of County Councils in respect of Contracts for the supply of Road Materials, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Gurdon, Mr. Winterbotham, Mr. Somervell, and Sir Joseph Pease.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 232.]

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

Bill "to grant certain Duties of Customs and Inland Revenue; to repeal and alter other Duties; and to amend the Laws relating to Customs and Inland Revenue," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, at Two of the clock, and to be printed. [Bill 231.]

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 24th April, 1890.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Napier of Magdala, after the death of his father.

The Viscount Falmouth, after the death of his father.

LIGHT RAILWAYS (IRELAND) ACT, 1889, AMENDMENT BILL.

A Bill to mend the Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889—Was presented by the Lord Clements (*E. Leitrim*); read[a]; and to be printed. (No. 60.)

BILLS OF SALE BILL.—(No. 51.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, this is a Bill identical with one which was passed last Session, and which has been rendered necessary in consequence of an artificial interpretation of the existing law which has created exceeding difficulty in commercial transactions in the City of Liverpool and elsewhere. By that interpretation certain commercial documents have been deemed bills of sale. It never was intended or contemplated by the Legislature that that should be the operation of it, and the present Bill which consists of a single clause is to exempt from the operation of the Bills of Sale Act those instruments, and to prevent injury to persons who are interested in the transaction of such business.

Read 2a (according to order), and committed to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 57.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, this is a Bill which has come from the other House, and I need detain your Lordships but a few minutes in explaining its object. In the year 1876 a Bill was passed for the better protection of life at sea, under which the obligation was imposed upon the owner of every vessel to mark upon her the line of the deck, and also to mark upon her, at such point as he thought right, a disc which was to indicate the depth above which the vessel was not to be loaded. Permission was given under that Act to the Board of Trade to detain ships that were overloaded, a power which was frequently acted upon. Your Lordships will readily understand that the load-line as marked by the owner was not always such a load-line as the Board of Trade considered proper, and they consequently were not always satisfied to abstain from detaining ships which were loaded no deeper than the load-line marked by the owner. But at that time it was thought to be of very great practical difficulty, if not impossible, to fix a load-line on principles which should be generally satisfactory. Consequently, the Legislature then left the fixing of the load-line entirely to the owner of the vessel, although of course to a certain extent it may be said that was subject to a revision by the Board of Trade, inasmuch as they might detain a vessel as being overloaded, notwithstanding that the loading was not in excess of that which the load-line defined. Afterwards a very powerful Committee was appointed upon the subject to answer three questions which were submitted to them by the Board of Trade for inquiry. The first was—

> "Whether it is now practicable to frame new general rules concerning freeboard which will prevent dangerous overloading without unduly interfering with trade; if so, whether any and which of the existing Tables should be adopted, or how far such Tables can be adopted as fixed rules; and what amount of discretion was necessary to be given?"

That Committee was presided over by Sir Edward Reed, and upon it were some eminent shipowners and persons connected with insurance bodies. They reported to the Board of Trade—

> "First, we are of opinion that it is now practicable to frame general rules concerning freeboard which will prevent dangerous overloading without unduly interfering with trade;"

and they submitted Tables which they considered might be adopted in regard to loading cargo vessels for some years to come without giving any more discretion than as concerned the quality and condition of the ship. They also expressed their opinion that the adoption of such a compulsory load line would be an advantage to shipowners in this respect, that it would prevent that tension which existed between the Board of Trade and shipowners with regard to the overloading of vessels; and they anticipated that the time would come, and ought to come, when a load-line should be made compulsory. Subsequently to the Report of that Committee, the final Report was made by the Commission on Loss of Life at Sea. That Royal Commission made the recommendation that the load-line recommended by the Committee on that subject, and then acted upon by the Board of Trade and Lloyd's, should be made compulsory by legislative enactment enforcible by penalty. This Bill, of which I now propose the Second Reading, is simply to carry out that recommendation of the Royal Commission, that the principles which the Load-line Committee suggested should be acted upon in determining the load-line which was to be marked upon vessels, so that the load-line should be once for all settled by authority, and the point conclusively fixed below which the loading ought not to take place. I need not detain your Lordships further upon this matter, except to point out that from the evidence which was given before the Royal Commission upon Loss of Life at Sea, and which led to that recommendation, there was still reason to think that the present legislation was not sufficiently effective for the purpose. Dealing only with the subject of missing ships, there was evidence given before the Royal Commission that in cases which had been investigated of 65 missing vessels, the disasters were due in 30 of those cases to overloading. That is to say, nearly one-half of the cases of missing ships inquired into were found to have arisen from overloading, or, speaking roughly, 46 per cent. The important character of this matter will appear from the fact that during the last eight years the loss of life in missing ships has been very heavy, amounting to 944 lives. It is impossible, of course, to say absolutely that the percentage found in the 65 cases of missing vessels examined into, namely, 46 per cent., prevailed throughout the whole of the vessels lost; but, supposing that to be so, it would show that there had been a loss of life owing to overloading of 434 lives. I do not, of course, suggest that that can be regarded as strictly accurate; but, at all events, it is sufficient to indicate that the recommendations of the Royal Commission proceeded upon substantial grounds, and that ample proof was given that great loss of life did, in fact, result from overloading. My Lords, considering that this measure has been passed in the other House, that it is approved by the Board of Trade, and that it has received the acquiescence of the great body of shipowners, who are well represented in the other House, I think your Lordships will come to the conclusion that it is a Bill which should receive your sanction, and that you ought to give it a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Lord KNUTSFORD): My Lords, I do not rise in any way to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill, which I understand, as the noble and learned Lord has stated, has received the entire approval of the Board of Trade. But, since the Bill was discussed in the other House, it appears that a difficulty has arisen with regard to Canada. I have had strong representations made to me from Canada, and especially from New Brunswick, that this Bill will operate very prejudicially against a certain class of wooden vessels which are largely used there. Those vessels are classed in the Bureau Veritas and not at Lloyd's; they are built on a different model to that of the iron vessels constructed in the United Kingdom; it is thought that British surveyors have not a sufficient knowledge of those vessels which would enable them fairly to decide what should be the load-line for those vessels; and, lastly, a strong objection is felt to any British Association being employed in finally approving or fixing a compulsory load-line for those vessels. It is proposed that Canadian vessels of this character should be altogether exempted from the operation of the Act: or, if that is not practicable, that the further proceeding with this Bill should be delayed until it can be submitted to the Canadian Government, and until some arrangements can be made for meeting this special difficulty. It would not be right, I think, that Canadian vessels should be altogether exempt from the operation of this Act, and not subject to, at all events, the principles there laid down; but, after consultation with the officials of the Board of Trade, and with the concurrence of the President of that Department, we have framed a clause which I think ought to satisfy, and will, I believe, satisfy, the Canadian Authorities. The effect of the clause is that if by a Colonial Legislature provision is made for fixing and marking a load-line which, to the satisfaction of the Board of Trade, is based upon the principles of this Bill, that load-line so fixed should then be (subject to the approval of the Board of Trade) declared by an Order in Council to be a load-line in conformity with the provisions of this Bill. Similar provisions were, as the noble and learned Lord is aware, made some years ago, by Section 8 of 32 & 33 Vict. c. 11, with reference to the examinations and certificates of masters and pilots. Upon the Board of Trade being satisfied that the examination in those cases were equal to the examination in this country certificates which were given in Canada and other colonies to pilots and masters were held to be certificates within the meaning of that Imperial Act. I shall, therefore, propose in Committee that this clause, which I will hand to my noble and learned Friend, and which embodies the substance of what I have stated, be added. As I have stated, it has received the approval of the President of the Board of Trade.

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH: My Lords, I do not propose to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill, but I should like to say a few words upon it. As my noble Friend has shown, it is approved by very high Authority, and has passed the other House of Parliament. It has also received the acquiescence of shipowners; but there are one or two observations, I think, to be made upon it, which I hope your Lordships will pardon me for making at this stage. We have already heard of the requests, to which I shall presently refer, by a very important Body with regard to the approval of the Board of Trade, and consequently it has been thought proper to insert a clause to meet the objections on that point. I shall claim, on behalf of an equally important Body, the insertion of a clause in Committee which think it only fair should be inserted And, speaking for myself, I will venture to make one or two observations which, I think, are not altogether without foundation. I deny that any cause whatever has been shown for this Bill. I very much object to the principle of a fixed load-line by enactment, upon this broad ground, that you are shifting from the shoulders of the shipowners that responsibility which experience has shown ought to be thrown upon them, and which they are the most competent to bear. I would also make this objection: it is thought by many who are well qualified to judge that this Bill proceeds upon an entirely erroneous principle, and I am quite sure that my noble and learned Friend will admit the force of this objection. It proceeds upon the assumption that a certain amount of freeboard or clear side is a guarantee of seaworthiness. No greater error can possibly be advanced, but that appears to be the idea most prominent in the minds of the framers of this Bill. It is no guarantee at all. In loading ships infinitely more depends upon the nature of the cargo, the strength of the vessel, the disposition or placing of the cargo, and the effect of strains upon certain portions of the vessel when labouring in heavy seas. Those are considerations of paramount importance, but they are altogether ignored, and there is merely dealt with in the Bill the question of giving a certain amount of clear side in a vessel. Therefore, I think my noble and learned Friend will admit that my objection on that ground, that a fixed load-line is no guarantee whatever of the seaworthiness of a ship, is entitled to, at least, some weight. Then, my Lords, there is another matter. I quite admit that the Board of Trade have desired to consult not only humble individuals like myself in this matter, but the wishes of the general body of shipowners. They have, in a fair and honest manner, endeavoured to meet many of the objections raised against a fixed load-line, and the Bill now before us is a very different Bill indeed to that which was originally proposed in the House of Commons, and especially there are further important provisions in it, to apply after the Bill has become law, as regards the administration of the Act. The supervision of a single official, unassisted by scientific and competent advice, would have been a very unwise thing, but if, as I understand is the case, the Board of Trade have appointed the Committee of Lloyd's to administer the Act, that entirely avoids the objection, because of all Bodies in this country, I think it will be agreed, there is none more qualified than that Committee. If you are to have a public Body appointed which should be competent to administer this Act, I do not think you could select a more desirable Body. There is another point of very great importance, which this Bill leaves entirely untouched, and that is with regard to foreign ships. The representative of the Board of Trade will correct me if I am wrong, but I think they have power to stop any vessels in our ports, if unduly loaded. That is a very important matter. But I must point out that British ships go to all parts of the world. Supposing a ship built for a particular service—for instance, designed to carry dead-weight cargoes, the most dangerous of any kind of cargoes. Her load-line will be fixed with reference to that particular purpose of carrying such cargoes. She may start from these shores under a time Charter, and may be absent for a couple of years, loading cargoes at foreign ports in various parts of the world, competing with foreign vessels on which there is no restriction, and the fact of her being restricted to a dead-weight load-line may absolutely confine her to taking a dead-weight cargo. Vessels are not very likely to get a dead-weight cargo in a foreign port, but they go out with various cargoes and they will be heavily handicapped against foreign ships by being bound to a fixed line for a dead-weight cargo. That, I think, is a most important matter for consideration. Then there is another point to which I desire to call your Lordships' attention. When I rose, I intended to make a suggestion to the Board of Trade with regard to appealing in cases which involve technical scientific details, and I may state that I have received communications from two Bodies which, I think, are worthy of consideration. I refer to the representatives of two of the ports in this country. Now, if there are two of our ports which are distinguished among the others, though I do not mean to the exclusion of others, for it would be invidious to say that—two ports which stand high in regard to the type and character of the vessels belonging to them, they are the Clyde and Belfast. They have addressed me on the subject, and have asked me to press this point upon the Board of Trade. To show the *bona fides* of their request, I may point out that they are perfectly willing, in case there should be any difficulty in carrying out the necessary scientific investigations and recommendations, which very few people are qualified to deal with, and which may entail considerable expense, that in all cases of final appeal the shipowner shall bear the costs, in order to prevent frivolous and vexatious appeals. They state that they are perfectly willing that that should be required, and I think that shows a reasonableness in their request, which I hope will not be lost sight of. However, this is not, of course, the right stage of the Bill at which to propose the introduction of a clause of that kind. All I would ask is that that matter should not be lost sight of. Since this Bill has passed the House of Commons I have had the opportunity of speaking to a man who is, perhaps, as competent to give an opinion upon the subject of fixing a load-line as anybody; I mean the Chairman of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. He is strongly in favour of the introduction of such a clause, and, in the event of the Bill passing without it, it would, in his opinion, be necessary to present to Parliament a special Bill for the purpose of making provision for what is required. He is an authority of some weight, and he is entirely in favour of such a clause being introduced. Then, my Lords, there is another great objection which, to my mind, operates more strongly than any other; and I am speaking now from many years' personal experience of these matters, and having had the opportunity of consulting very high authorities on the subject. My objection is that if you lay down a law for a fixed load-line with regard to ships (because the gist of this Bill is that every vessel ought to be marked with a fixed load-line), in addition to the stronger objection of removing responsibility from the proper shoulders, you must consider what has been the effect of such legislation in past years. My opinion is that shipowners and shipbuilders will build simply according to the law, and not for safety. When the Tonnage Laws forced the shipowners into building a particular description of vessels, they built their ships with the view to getting the largest amount of carrying capacity. You will find deep, narrow, long vessels being built which will present a plausible amount of freeboard, but which in heavy seas will be inevitably lost. Scores and scores of vessels have, under those circumstances, been lost at sea. My firm conviction is that shipowners will load simply according to law, and not according to their own wishes and discretion as to what the ship should really carry. A shipowner will say: "Here is the load-line; I am entitled by law to load the ship down to it." You will divert shipbuilders from building otherwise than as the law authorises. Now, my Lords, against whom is legislation of this kind directed? It seems to me it is directed against the wise, prudent, and humane shipowner, who does his best for the prosperity and advantage of a great industry, and of all industries in this country I think this is the most important for us. I can speak from my own knowledge on this subject, because I know that the improvement which has taken place in the type of our merchant vessels is very great. That is admitted on all hands, and by no one more so than the Chairman of the Committee to which I have referred, Sir Edward Reed, who says that the improvement in our ships has been enormous. What has been the great object which our shipbuilders have had in view during the last four or five years? It has been by careful experiment and trial to ascertain those parts of the ship where the strain is felt, from the dead-weight cargo which I have described as the most unfavourable kind of cargo acting upon the hull or frame of the vessel, and to strengthen the ship in those parts; that is to say, the upper decks and those portions of the ship where the strain is found to operate most. Surely it is a very hard thing for our shipowners to be called upon now to build by a hard and fast law of this kind, and that a hard and fast line should be enforced upon them. I do not think that would be at all a wise piece of legislation. My Lords, I have detained you longer than I wished. I do not like to go into technical matters on this subject; but I do hope to hear, on behalf of the Board of Trade, that they will take into consideration the suggestion I have thrown out with regard to the insertion of a clause in reference to a Court of Appeal. It is necessary that provision should be made for that purpose. Scientific judgment is absolutely necessary upon the question whether a ship is seaworthy or not, and provision should be made for obtaining in proper cases a decision whether she is thoroughly safe or not by some experienced Body. I wish, of course, to speak in the highest terms of Lloyd's, yet they have, no doubt, their own particular views. Then, another point is that an owner may build a ship and not choose to classify her at Lloyd's. He may prefer to class her with some other Association, and he may have built her even in excess of Lloyd's own rules. Yet the load-line would be fixed without reference to that fact, which should have, I think, some weight, given, of course, that she will stand the strain. I will not trouble your Lordships further, but I hope I shall receive something like an assurance from my noble Friend on behalf of the Board of Trade that they will take into consideration the question of a Court of Appeal.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH): My Lords, I had hardly thought, after the speech from my noble and learned Friend opposite, that it would be necessary for me to say anything in regard to this Bill; but I feel bound to say a few words in answer to the direct application made to me by the noble Lord who has just sat down. As the noble and learned Lord has said, a great many alterations were made in this Bill while it was passing through the other House of Parliament with a view of making its provisions workable and rendering it a useful measure. I was glad to hear from the noble Lord who has just spoken, that he considers those Amendments as improvements, and was not now prepared to offer a strenuous opposition to the passage of the Bill through your Lordships' House. Upon one remark which the noble Lord made I should like to say a few words. He said, which is no doubt very true, that the having a compulsory load-line beyond which a ship should not be loaded was not in itself an absolute guarantee that that vessel so loaded would be safe. We entirely accept that statement; but, on the other hand, I think it will be admitted that a ship which is obviously overloaded is in a dangerous condition on that account, and that she should, if possible, be prevented from sailing. Every effort should be made to prevent, at any rate, a portion of the loss of life which has been mentioned by the noble Lord opposite.

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH: You have the power of stopping any ships which you think are overloaded now.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: Yes, there is that power, but still the provisions of this Bill will be an additional guarantee against overloading, and will strengthen the hands of the officers of the Board of Trade in carrying out the powers they already possess. I wish also to refer to what the noble Earl said as to the powers given to the Board of Trade to make regulations in regard to the difficulty of settling any fixed load-line. That difficulty was present to the minds of those who settled this Bill in the other House of Parliament. If your Lordships will turn to Clause 2, Sub-section A, you will find these words: that the Board of Trade may make regulations

> "Determining the lines or marks to be used in connection with the disc, in order to indicate the maximum load-line under different circumstances and at different seasons, and declaring that the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1876, are to have effect as if any such line were drawn through the centre of the disc."

Your Lordships, therefore, see that it is to be according to the different times of the year, and the different classes of cargo which the ships are intended to carry that the regulation will be made; and I think the noble Lord, therefore, will admit that as far as possible elasticity has been introduced into the provisions of the Bill without sacrificing what is good in them. No doubt it is the case that when ships go from ports in the United Kingdom to foreign ports and are there re-loaded, the control of what may be done there will to a very considerable extent be lost by the Board of Trade. It is intended in Committee to define accurately the application of the Bill as far as possible, and to put in an Amendment which will make distinct the exact limits to which the Act will apply. A proviso will be submitted to the Committee having that for its object. My Lords, the noble Lord called attention to the provisions of the 2nd section and approved of the course proposed to be taken of authorising the Board of Trade to appoint the Committee of Lloyd's Register to carry out the provisions of this Bill. But the provisions of the Bill are even more liberal to the shipowners than the noble Lord indicated. Not only is it compulsory on the Board of Trade to appoint the Committee of Lloyd's Register if the Board wishes any appointment, but permission is given to the owner of the vessel to select any other Corporation, or Association, approved by the Board of Trade, or any officer of the Board of Trade specially selected by the Board for that purpose. I think it will be admitted that on that point, again, a desire has been shown to meet all the demands of the ship-owning community. With regard to the Amendment which the noble Lord has intimated his intention of moving, I can only say at present that I have not had the opportunity of seeing the representations which he says have been sent in to the Board of Trade. I only returned this morning from Ireland, where I have been engaged on business connected with the Board of Trade; but I will give him this undertaking, that I will, at the earliest moment, examine those representations, and that any recommendation put forward will receive the most careful consideration; but, as I understand he says they are recommendations which can only be dealt with in Committee, I will not say any more about them now. I will ask the House to give a Second Reading to the Bill, and I would ask the noble and learned Lord who has charge of it if he will allow a week to elapse at least before taking the next stage. That will not prejudice the Bill.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH: Might I suggest to the noble and learned Lord to say the week after next?

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, I should, of course, be desirous of meeting the views of the House in the matter; but there is this reason against any delay taking place greater than is necessary, that the Bill does not come into operation until six months after it passes. Of course, that suspension was intended to give an opportunity to the shipowners to comply with its requirements. But even six months from the present time will bring us on to the beginning of winter; and, therefore, one would desire that the passing of the Bill should not be delayed longer than necessary. Subject to that, I should be glad to give time, as the noble Lord desires. Now, I should like to say a few words upon what my noble Friend has said with regard to relieving the shipowner from responsibility. I believe the noble Lord was in the other House in 1876, when the Merchant Shipping Act was under consideration, and I was one of those who took much the same view as the noble Lord in regard to being very much disinclined to relieve the shipowner of responsibility. But I think in this particular it may safely be done. The noble Earl has suggested that, having regard to the different characteristics which different ships may possess, there are many elements to be considered besides the mere question of free-board in considering the point to which a ship may safely be loaded. You cannot put the point in the same place in all circumstances; but whether you can in no way prevent dangerous overloading is another question. I do not express any opinion myself; but I think consideration should be given to the fact that such a very competent body to represent the views of the shipowners as Lloyd's Registry, has distinctly come to the conclusion that it is practicable to frame general rules which will prevent dangerous overloading without interfering with trade. As to the point of making it compulsory, a letter has been written by the Chairman of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, drawing attention to the difference of opinion in these matters between the shipowners and the Board of Trade with regard to the proper loading of vessels, and that it has become necessary that something should be done to put an end to the state of tension existing more especially in regard to ships engaged in carrying heavy cargoes. So that a distinct indication is given there that it will be an advantage to shipowners, seeing that the Board of Trade has power to detain overladen vessels, that there should be a load-line fixed which has the sanction of the Board of Trade, and which should settle the question as between the Board of Trade and the shipowners. When the noble Earl suggests that vessels should be so constructed as that they will require more freeboard than at present, surely all that can be taken into account by so highly competent a body as Lloyd's Registry who, before fixing a load-line, would take that into consideration and fix it accordingly. I can only say with regard to the question of appeal, it seems to me there would be considerable difficulty in establishing or determining upon a competent Court of Appeal. As the matter at present stands if there is no prior appointment by the shipowner it would be left to the determination of Lloyd's Registry. As far as that body, being a capable tribunal, goes, I do not suppose there will be much question about that; but if the shipowner objects to that tribunal he may name any other Registry of Shipping, and if that body is approved of by the Board of Trade the line may be fixed by them instead; or if he pleases he may ask that the line be fixed by an officer of the Board of Trade specially appointed for the purpose. It seems to me that that gives such a practical choice between tribunals of equal competence as to leave the shipowner really in the position of getting a satisfactory line fixed. I have some doubt, I confess, whether there would be likely to be any advantage to the shipowner in having a Court of Appeal, and whether you could get such a Court of Appeal as would be practically a suitable Court by reason of superior knowledge and experience as compared with the knowledge and experience to be found in any of these authorities between whom the shipowner—not the Board of Trade—is given the choice. My Lords, I do not think at present I need say anything further.

On question, agreed to.

Bill read 2^a (according to order), and committed to the Standing Committee for General Bills.

DOCK ACCOMMODATION AT BOMBAY AND GIBRALTAR.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

Viscount SIDMOUTH: My Lords, I have two questions which I wish to put to Her Majesty's Government, and I shall not detain the House more than a few minutes in doing so. The first has reference to the proposed Dock at Bombay. I would ask the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) whether, in the agreement about to be made with the Bombay Port Trust, care will be taken that a clause shall be inserted which shall empower Her Majesty's Government to make a prior claim in all cases where it may be necessary for the repair of Her Majesty's ships? Upon this matter I would venture to refer to a remark which fell from my noble Friend, in which he spoke of the dock at Bombay as being intended for Indian and not for Imperial purposes. I think any dock there which is to be used at all by the Navy must be regarded as not for the use of the ships on the Station—not confined to vessels employed merely on the Indian Station, but extending to vessels which sail up the Persian Gulf, patrolling all those waters, and going as far as Zanzibar. My second question is as to the proposed dock at Gibraltar, and with regard to that I would ask the Government whether they propose to introduce a similar clause into any agreement in reference to the dock, and also whether they will take into consideration the importance of adding a clause which will enable the Government in case of war, or in any case of necessity, to purchase the dock for their own use? I need not remind the House that Gibraltar is a military rather than a commercial port; and it seems to me that, if we do assume the great responsibility which rests upon us of making a dock not entirely belonging to Government, that the Government should in all cases have a prior claim to the use of it. Before I sit down I wish to refer to some words which fell from a Member of the Government lately, which have led me to think that after all the Government intend to construct the dock themselves, and to take it out of private hands. That is surely the only course worthy of a great naval country like this, for the sum of £350,000, which will be required, is a mere flea-bite considering that our naval interest upon that portion of the seas alone must be valued at £10,000,000 sterling.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): My Lords, with reference to the Port Trust Dock at Bombay, the noble Viscount will remember that when I was asked a similar question before the Recess I gave a provisional answer, stating my belief that the Government had the power of using that dock whenever they wanted it for Her Majesty's ships. I have since made inquiry into the matter, and I have much pleasure in informing the noble Viscount that this point was not lost sight of when sanction was given to the construction of the graving dock, and that the Bombay Port Trust have agreed to the Government having a preferential right to the use of it in time of emergency.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: With regard to the second question of the noble Viscount as to the dock at Gibraltar, when he mentioned the matter early in the Session I told the noble Viscount that a site had been selected, and that in connection with the works it was proposed to extend the new mole some 16,000ft. We then proposed to carry it out by private enterprise, and in the draft agreement which was then drawn up on the subject clauses, such as the noble Viscount refers to, were inserted, to the effect that the Government were to have priority of claim for docking Her Majesty's ships, and Government were to have the power of acquiring the dock by purchase, not only in the event of war, but in any other circumstances when such a course might be desirable. Since then certain difficulties have been pointed out with regard to the construction of the dock by private enterprise—difficulties which require very careful consideration. A small Departmental Committee has been appointed to consider the whole subject and to suggest the best way of carrying out the work which the Admiralty are so desirous to see concluded.

House adjourned at a quarter past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 24th April, 1890.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table ; and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON STREETS (STRAND IMPROVEMENT) BILL (*by Order.*)

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on nomination of Select Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Shaw Lefevre be a Member of the Select Committee."—(*Mr. Baumann.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Ambrose be a Member of the Select Committee."—(*Mr. Baumann.*)

*(3.5.) Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I had expected that the right hon. Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock) would have been here to have expressed his views in regard to the names proposed by the hon. Member for Peckham (Mr. Baumann) to be upon this Committee. If the names are to be put up *seriatim* it may seem invidious to suggest the substitution of other names.

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to explain that the right hon. baronet the Member for the University of London has agreed with the President of the Local Government Board and myself that two other Gentlemen shall be added to the Committee; one to be nominated by each side of the House. I propose to move the names on the Paper to-day, and then to give notice of the names of the other two.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: In addition to the names on the Paper?

Mr. BAUMANN: Yes.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: Then without the slightest desire to give personal offence, and speaking individually, I must say that I think the names proposed by the hon. Member for Peckham, other than that of the right hon. Gentleman who has been elected, will scarcely command the confidence of the people of London. I, therefore, trust that the hon. Member will postpone the appointment of the Committee, so that some communication may take place upon the matter between the various London representatives. I have great respect for the hon. Member for Harrow (Mr. Ambrose), but I believe he is one of those who have committed themselves to a particular view upon the question involved in the Bill; and I hardly think, therefore, that he ought to be appointed upon the Committee. Then, again, it is proposed to nominate the noble Marquess the Member for Brixton (the Marquess of Carmarthen), but I would venture to suggest that there are many Members of the House who have had a larger experience of public business, and who possess a greater knowledge of the wants and requirements of the Metropolis. There are Members representing London and town constituencies who have been much longer Members of this House than the noble Marquess, the hon. Member for Peckham himself, or the hon. and learned Member for Harrow, and whose decision in dealing with this important question would command much more confidence. Under these circumstances I would make an appeal to the President of the Local Government Board to re-consider the composition of the Committee, and to consult the feeling of the general body of the London Members.

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Government are not responsible for the names which appear on the Paper, and I can assure the hon. Member that they are as anxious as he is that the Report of the Committee on a subject of such vast importance should carry with it all the weight which ought to come from the consideration of such a question. It may be invidious to discuss the relative merits of the gentlemen who are nominated to serve upon the Committee; but, as to the first objection of the hon. Gentleman that some of the gentlemen whose names have still to be agreed to have already expressed an opinion upon the subject, I hardly think that the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) whose name has already been agreed to, will concur in that objection, because I think that the right hon. Gentleman, whose name was agreed to without discussion, has distinctly expressed his views upon the matter. I make no complaint against the right hon. Gentleman on that score, but I simply mention the fact to show that it would be extremely difficult to nominate Members upon a Committee of this kind, who are conversant with the subject, who have not expressed an opinion upon it. It must be remembered that the Committee of Selection have also to nominate four gentlemen, and it is to be hoped that the gentlemen appointed by them will command weight and authority. With reference to the hon. Member for Harrow I may say that my hon. and learned Friend is recognised as one of the ablest lawyers in the House, and at the Bar. At the same time there is some force in the objection that the right hon. Member for the University of London is not present, and I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham would do well, as he has arranged with the right hon. Baronet to add two more names to the Committee, making the number appointed by the House seven instead of five, to postpone the Motion until the whole of the names can be submitted. No unnecessary delay will take place, seeing that it is necessary to give notice of the two additional names.

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I must say that, in my opinion, the whole of this question has been placed in a most unsatisfactory position, and therefore I hope the hon. Member opposite will take the advice of the President of the Local Government Board and pospone the consideration of the subject until the whole of the names can be submitted to the House. I would respectfully point out to the Government that it is desirable not only to have Members of legal standing and experience upon the Committee, but that it is essential to have

Mr. Ritchie

Members who are practically acquainted with the subject. The hon. Member for Harrow, on a previous occasion, committed himself to a particular view, and, therefore, I do not think it would be right to appoint him upon a Committee which is supposed to inquire into the subject with strict impartiality. It would be just as much out of place to nominate me, seeing that I expressed an opposite view to that of the hon. and learned Member, and endeavoured to lay before the House some reasons why the principle of betterment should be incorporated in the Bill. If the hon. Member for Peckham is not prepared to accede to the suggestion which had been made to him, I would move that the debate be adjourned.

*Mr. RITCHIE: My suggestion was that my hon. Friend should postpone his Motion, because, in any case, after the arrangement between my hon. Friend and the right hon. Member for the University of London, it will be necessary to place the additional names upon the Paper.

*Mr. CREMER: As the hon Member has not risen to accede to the request of the right hon. Gentleman, I beg to move that the debate be adjourned, with a view to the re-consideration of the matter, so that the Committee may be composed in a more satisfactory manner. It must not be forgotten that this is a question which affects vitally the interests of nearly 4,000,000 of people in this Metropolis, and it ought not to be passed over lightly. It would be better to postpone the consideration of the Bill for a week or two than to have an inquiry which may be injurious to the interests of the public.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Cremer.*)

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I think that the course proposed by the President of the Local Government Board that the discussion should be postponed until the additional names have been placed upon the Paper is a reasonable and proper one. I have only to say, in reference to the remarks which the right hon. Gentleman has made upon myself, that it is perfectly true that on many occasions I have committed myself strongly to the principle of what is called the betterment clause, but I have not formed a definite opinion whether it should be applied to the particular case before the House, nor have I committed myself on the question whether the principle should be embodied in a Public Bill or should be included in Private Bills like that before the House.

Mr. BAUMANN: The nomination of this Committee has been frequently postponed already, but, after the request of my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board, I have no objection to postpone the Motion again, although I feel that I am unable to withdraw any of the names which are on the Paper, or to alter the composition of the Committee.

Mr. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow): It is quite true that I have expressed an opinion upon the general question of betterment, but hon. Members will do me the justice to remember that I did not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. There is some difference between betterment in the abstract and betterment in the concrete, and if I am appointed upon the Committee I shall certainly enter into the consideration of the question with an impartial mind.

Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned," put, and agreeed to.

RICHMOND FOOTBRIDGE (LOCK, &c.) BILL (*by Order.*)

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to move "That the Order [24th February] that the Richmond Footbridge (Lock, &c.) Bill be committed, be read and discharged." This is a Bill similar to the one we have been discussing, which has been referred to a Hybrid Committee. Technically, it is a Private Bill, but it embraces important public interests. I am certainly surprised that there should be any opposition to my proposal, because, upon applying to the Board of Trade, the Secretary of the Board said that not only was there no objection on the part of the Board, but, on the contrary, they thought it was desirable that this action should be taken. My proposition is that the Bill should be referred to a Hybrid Committee of seven Members, four to be nominated by the House, and three by the Committee of Selection. I hope that the opposition will not be persisted in. If it is, I shall certainly take the sense of the House upon it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order [24th February] that the Richmond Footbridge (Lock, &c.) Bill be committed, be read and discharged."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I am at a loss to understand upon what ground this proposal is made. It is an ordinary Bill, and should be sent to an ordinary and not to a Special Committee. The Motion of the hon. Member would exclude a number of the resident parishioners from being heard upon the Bill, and if the Bill be sent to a Hybrid Committee I think it will be necessary to secure that they should be heard. I shall, therefore, oppose the Motion of the hon. Gentleman, in order that the Bill should be sent to an ordinary Committee.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The hon. Member has not explained what the Bill is.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has already spoken.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I only wish to explain that although the Bill is described as a Footbridge Bill, it is really a Bill for the construction of a lock, and to authorise the damming up of the River Thames.

(3.35.) The House divided:—Ayes 100; Noes 106.—(Div. List, No. 57.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That all Petitions against the said Bill already presented, or which may be presented not later than three clear days before the sitting of the Committee, be referred to the Committee, and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, or by their counsel, agents, and witnesses, be heard upon their Petitions, if they think fit, and counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitions."—(*Mr. Octavius V. Morgan.*)

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I really feel bound to oppose this Motion, and I must point out to hon. Gentlemen opposite that they have got themselves into a nice mess, seeing that they have been voting against the express wish of their own Board of Trade. As the House have refused to appoint a Hybrid Committee, and the Bill has to be referred to an ordinary Committee, and as one of the arguments used against my proposal was that if a Hybrid Committee were appointed it would involve an increased expenditure, owing to the large number of people who would go before it, I wish to point out that, if the present proposal is adopted, it would open the door to every Tom, Dick, and Harry, and that the Committee would have to sit for the next two months.

Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND: I would propose to omit from the Resolution the words, "subject to the Rules, Orders, and proceedings of this House." If those words are retained a number of persons will be left out.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question before the House is not the Motion of the hon. Member for Northampton, but that which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. O. V. Morgan).

Major BANES (West Ham, S.): In the interests of an important part of London, I beg to support the Motion.

*Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I must appeal to the leader of the House not to sanction this Motion. As the Bill is to be referred to an ordinary and not to a Hybrid Committee, its proceedings must be governed by the Standing Orders of the House, and they would have to be suspended before the Motion could be put.

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I think that we ought to be careful to observe the rules and orders of the House, and, under the circumstances of the case, I hope the hon. Member for Battersea will consent to the adjournment of the Debate, so that it may be ascertained whether the Motion is in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): I am willing to consent to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman.

Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned," put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Monday next.

QUESTIONS.

IRELAND—LAND COMMISSIONERS—SECURITY FROM TENANTS.

(4.0.) Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland

whether security, in the shape of promissory notes, or otherwise, has been at any time required or taken by the Land Commissioners from persons other than the purchasing occupiers in sales under the Land Purchase (Ireland) Acts, 1885 to 1888; and, if so, in how many instances has such outside security been required, and what is the legal authority for it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): The Land Commissioners report that in carrying out sales of estates to tenants they meet with exceptional cases in which, while they do not feel justified in refusing to sanction the sale of a particular holding, they deem it prudent to receive supplemental securities. Such supplemental securities have been given by the landlord in 61 cases, and on behalf of the tenant in 14 cases. The Commissioners' legal authority is the right possessed by every mortgagee to accept supplementary securities, if offered.

THE ASHBOURNE ACTS.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn (Mr. Keay), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the nine holdings stated to have been re-sold in consequence of default by tenant purchasers under the Ashbourne Acts, whether he will state the date of the original sale, and the amount of the original purchase money, of each of these holdings respectively; the amount realised from the tenant purchaser in each case in respect of the annuity up to the date of default; and the date of re-sale, and the price received in each case; was the price in each case received in cash; and what loss, if any, has been sustained by the Treasury or by the original landlord in each case in consequence of the default and re-sale?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have the particulars, and shall be happy to show them to the hon. Member, but it would take a long time to read them out to the House.

Mr. ESSLEMONT: Has the right hon. Gentleman any evidence to show what, in the cases of re-sale, the arrears were?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

Mr. ESSLEMONT: It is well-known that in many instances the arrears were included in the purchase money, and that the default was owing to that fact.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What the hon. Gentleman means is that the total purchase money has been in excess of the value of the holdings. I have no grounds to think that such has been the case.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that on several estates recently sold to tenants under the Ashbourne Acts (and notably on Lord Shannon's estate, near Middleton) portions of the property sold consisted of the plots of ground taken on 99 years' lease by Boards of Guardians under the Labourers' Acts, for the erection of labourers' cottages; whether in these cases, under the existing law, the landlord's rent and reversion, in respect of the labourer's cottage, must be either retained by the landlord who is selling, or bought by the tenant who is purchasing, and who thus becomes the landlord of the Guardians; and whether he will consider the advisability of giving Boards of Guardians themselves power to purchase in such cases?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The law is as stated in the question. The suggestion in the last paragraph shall receive consideration.

ENNISKILLEN POST OFFICE—CASE OF D. MAGAW.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will re-consider the claim of David Magaw, for compensation from the Post Office for breach of agreement, in connection with the Post Office at Enniskillen?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, University of Cambridge): I should not be prepared to recommend the Government to repeat the offer made to Mr. Magaw in 1884, unless he were to cancel the late Postmaster's case, as from that date.

KNOCKADOON AND BALLYCOTTON PIERS.

Dr. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that the Knockadoon and Ballycotton piers were both constructed under the same Act, the Board of Works have substantially repaired the former and neglected Ballycotton; can he explain why, although the County Cork Grand Jury (Summer 1889) passed £200 to repair Knockadoon, the Board of Works would not permit them to go on with the work, but did it themselves; if it be correct that the Board of Works has no responsibility for these structures after they are handed ever to the Grand Jury, why, and by what authority, did they accept responsibility for repairing Knockadoon, and deny responsibility in the case of Ballycotton; and whether the Treasury is aware of the fact that the Grand Jury have again refused to take over the Ballycotton pier, for the third time, in consequence of its faulty construction and rapid disintegration?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): The defects at Knockadoon arose from the inadvertent use of inferior cement in part of the work. The contractors expressed their willingness to supply fresh material free of charge, and the Board of Works were therefore authorised to make the repairs. I am informed by the Board of Works that, in their judgment, no repairs have been, or are required, at Ballycotton.

Dr. TANNER: The hon. Gentleman has not answered the first and third paragraphs of my question. Is it not a fact that considerable sums of money have been expended on Ballycotton pier, and did not the hon. Member see for himself that the construction of the pier is faulty? Is he satisfied to allow the work to pass into the hands of the Grand Jury in a faulty condition?

Mr. JACKSON: I think the two piers may be placed in the same category. I have no fear of any accident to Ballycotton pier. All the Reports show that the pier is in a satisfactory condition.

Dr. TANNER: Who is responsible for the care of Ballycotton pier at the present moment? Is it the Treasury, or the Grand Jury who have positively and absolutely refused to take it over?

Mr. JACKSON: I think the Grand Jury are responsible. They have no power to refuse to take it over, and it has been handed over to them.

Dr. TANNER: Have not the Grand Jury for the third time refused, in consequence of its faulty construction, to take it over? Are they, then, responsible for it?

Mr. JACKSON: Yes, Sir.

THE BELFAST POST OFFICE.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the promotions officially notified on the 17th of January last to the staff of the Telegraph Department of the Belfast Post Office as about to be made have yet taken place; if not, what is the reason of the delay, and if it is due to local causes; and if he can state whether those promised promotions will now be declared?

*Mr. RAIKES: The promotions at Belfast have now been made, and will date back to the 1st of February.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the appointments to the vacancies that arise upon the respective staffs, Postal and Telegraph, of the Belfast Post Office, are filled by open public competition or by nomination at the instance of the Postmaster of Belfast; if by the latter means, under what circumstances is such a privilege granted to the Postmaster; whether it is a fact that the power of making appointments by nomination to the Dublin Post Office, was, some years ago, withdrawn from Mr. Secretary Cresswell; whether examinations for vacancies in the Belfast Post Office are conducted upon the strict lines as laid down by the Civil Service Commissioners, and if such examinations are always held under the supervision of an irresponsible person; and whether directions will be given that all existing and future vacancies upon the respective staffs of the Belfast Post Office be filled by open public competition?

*Mr. RAIKES: To all junior appointments in the Provincial Post Offices the local Postmasters nominate. This is in accordance with an arrangement made many years ago upon the recommendation of a Committee of Inquiry, of which the late Lord Iddesleigh and Sir Charles Trevelyan were Members. It is not the fact that this arrangement has been withdrawn from the Dublin Post Office, for the simple reason that it never existed there. Examinations for appointment to the Belfast and other Post Offices are conducted in accordance with the directions of the Civil Service Commissioners, and under the supervision of responsible persons. This existing arrangement, on the whole, is believed to work fairly well, and I am not at present prepared to alter it.

CHARGE AGAINST POLICE CONSTABLES.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he noticed in the issue of the *Fermanagh Mail* of the 16th April, a report of a police inquiry held in Police Barracks No. 2, on the 5th April, in reference to a charge made against Constable Melley for an alleged breach of discipline, from which it appears that Constable Fitzsimons, who acknowledged himself to have been helplessly drunk on the 3rd March, while on special duty, was fined the sum of 10s., and removed to Cossycon, a short distance from Enniskillen; and that in reference to this same charge against Constable Fitzsimons, Constable Melley, who was in charge of him, and who was absolutely proved to be sober, was fined in the sum of 25s., and removed to Eshendarragh, one of the worst districts in the County of Fermanagh; and, whether he can explain the difference in the respective penalties inflicted, considering the relative disproportion of the offences.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary Authorities report that Constable Melley was more severely punished than the other constable; because in the opinion of the Court of Inquiry, who had all the facts before them, his case deserved it, he being a constable of 18 years' service, and in charge of the other, who had only four years' service. Each of the men was transferred to a station for which he was, in the opinion of the County Inspector, best adapted.

GALWAY BARRACKS.

Mr. PINKERTON (Galway): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been directed to resolutions passed by the Galway Town and Harbour Commissioners with regard to the present unsatisfactory state of the barracks in that town, and requesting the War Office to select one of the many excellent sites within convenient distance of the town, for the erection of a barrack suitable for troops, both from a sanitary and comfortable point of view; and if it is the intention of the War Office to accede to this request?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): My attention has been called to the Resolution passed by the Galway Town and Harbour Commissioners with regard to the present unsatisfactory state of the barracks in that town. I was otherwise well aware of the unsatisfactory condition of the barracks at Galway; and I certainly intend to deal with this subject under the Barrack Bill.

IRISH COUNTY COURT RULES.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland who is responsible for the drafting and issuing of the new Irish County Court Rules recently promulgated; whether it is the case that the new Rules are for the most part an exact reproduction of the existing Rules, with such alterations as recent legislation rendered necessary, and without any effort to amend or improve them; whether before issuing the new Rules they were submitted to any of the officials of the various County Courts concerned, or any attempt was made to obtain suggestions, with a view to improving the procedure of the Courts; and whether it is the fact that the Rules as issued are not complete, and do not contain the Rules as to equity?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): The Lord Chancellor's Secretary informs me that the new Irish County Court Rules in question were prepared and issued by and under the directions of the Lord Chancellor and the Council of County Court Judges, acting under the provisions of the County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877. They represent a consolidation and amendment of all Rules issued from time to time by the Lord Chancellor and Council of County Court Judges under that Act, all of which Rules were very carefully revised and amended. The Rules were, before being issued, submitted to all the County Court Judges, who had every opportunity, which was no doubt taken advantage of, of consulting with their officials, and several valuable suggestions were thus obtained and adopted in the consolidation and amendment of the Rules. I assume that the concluding paragraph of the question relates to the Rules as to equity appeals. I am informed that those Rules, so far as they are made by the Lord Chancellor and Council of County Court Judges, are embodied in the Rules in question.

Mr. M. HEALY: What are the Rules which are not embodied?

Mr. MADDEN: There are certain Rules under the County Court Trustees Act which are not embodied. All the formal Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and the County Court Judges are embodied.

FRENCH FISHING BOATS OFF THE IRISH COAST.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any complaints have reached him personally or through the Board of Trade that the three mile off-shore limit is constantly invaded by French fishing boats near Berehaven and on the adjacent Kerry Coast; and whether he would deem it desirable, in the interests of the local fishermen, whose boats are not so numerously manned, to send a gunboat to cruise in those fishing waters to prevent possible injustice to them?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): No complaints have been received at the Admiralty of any encroachments by French fishing boats on the coast of Kerry. The coastguard cruiser *Flora* is now cruising off the south-west coast of Ireland for the protection of the fisheries, and would, as a matter of course, extend her range of action to include the fishing grounds on the coast of Kerry if the proceedings of French fishermen rendered it necessary.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON: Is it a sailing cutter or a gunboat?

Lord G. HAMILTON: A sailing cutter.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON: Is it not the fact that a gunboat was stationed for three years in Bantry Bay for the use of a Resident Magistrate; and, if so, why should a gunboat not be considered necessary now?

[No answer.]

DR. TANNER: What is the name of the cutter? Is it the same cutter that was stationed for a long time at Queenstown?

[No answer.]

CRUELTY TO PIT-HORSES.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been directed to the following paragraph in the *Daily Graphic* of 15th April:—

> "Cruelty to Pit Horses.—A haulier, named Evans, engaged in a pit belonging to Messrs. Davis & Son, Ferndale, was charged at Ystrad Police Court yesterday with cruelty. Engaged at night, he had to drive a horse which had been worked during the day by another haulier. Defendant remarked that the horse seemed stubborn and would not do its work, whereupon he struck it several times with a sprag, causing serious swelling. The unfortunate horse had had only two hours' rest between the two shifts. A fine of £2 19s., including costs, was inflicted;"

and if it is possible to inflict heavier penalties in these cases?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have obtained a Report from the Justices on this case. They were inclined to believe that the defendant struck the horse once only with the sprag, as only one mark of a blow was proved. The horse was not disabled in any way. The defendant bore a good character, and there was no complaint against him of having ill-used an animal previously. The Justices consider that the sentence erred, if at all, on the side of severity. It was stated on behalf of the owners that the horse working for two consecutive shifts was an exceptional circumstance. The maximum fine is £5; but the Justices have the power of sentencing to three months' imprisonment.

CAVALRY BOOTMAKERS.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is a fact that the cavalry bootmakers of Adershot have been removed from the ordinary workshops and put in flagged outhouses, with open drains in and near them; if it is a fact that the bootmakers of the 11th Hussars had to buy coals all last winter out of their wages of 12s. a week; and is it a fact that the master bootmakers of the 16th Lancers, 11th Hussars, 19th Hussars, Army Service Corps, and Engineer Train are receiving 100 per cent. on repairs and 50 per cent. on new work, whilst workmen average 12s. a week wages?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The cavalry bootmakers of Aldershot have not been removed from the place where they have worked for years. The bootmakers of the 11th Hussars bought extra coal last winter to the extent of 1 cwt. a week. The master bootmakers' profits are fixed by regulation, and in no case exceeds 20 per cent. The men rarely work more than five days a week, and the average in most corps considerably exceed 12s. In the cavalry shops they could amount to 22s. 6d.

*MR. C. GRAHAM: What are the average wages? In how many instances are they above 12s. a week?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The wages vary in different forces. If the men choose to work overtime they receive more wages; but, as a matter of fact, they only, as a rule, work for five days a week.

THE SPIRIT DUTIES.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the duty charged upon British spirits is now 10s. 6d. per gallon, while the rate on West Indian Rum is 10s. 10d. per gallon, and whether the difference was originally made on account of the British distiller being interfered with by the Excise Laws; whether West India distillers are also subject to Colonial Excise Laws; and whether, if the two industries are on the same footing, he will consider the advisability of equalising the rate, having regard to the additional disadvantages at which West Indian rum is placed, consequent upon unrecoverable loss or damage in transit, costs of freight, insurance, &c?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The facts are as stated in the first paragraph. It is believed that Colonial distillers are subject to certain Excise restrictions, but not of such stringency as those imposed upon British distillers. The surtax on rum was formerly only 2d. a gallon; but in 1881 the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian proposed an adjustment of the surtax on Foreign and Colonial spirits, and fixed it at the uniform rate of 4d. on all imported spirits. Since that date circumstances have not arisen to justify any modification of the tax.

FRENCH LOBSTER FACTORIES IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

Mr. de LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, considering the fact that the Law Officers of the Crown have pronounced the opinion that neither by the Treaty of Utrecht, nor by any other Treaty, nor by prescription, have the French any right to erect lobster factories on the shores of Newfoundland; and whether, considering that the *modus vivendi* lately established now recognises the existence of such factories, Her Majesty's Government will take into consideration the exasperation which has been publicly expressed at indignation meetings held throughout the Island of Newfoundland to protest against the course that has been adopted?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): The Reports of the Law Officers of the Crown have always been treated by Her Majesty's Government as strictly confidential; but I do not recognise the words quoted by the hon. Gentleman as having occurred in any such opinion. They represent, nevertheless, the view of Her Majesty's Government. The *modus vivendi* now established in no way admits the right of the French to erect lobster factories, but is entirely without prejudice to the claims or contentions of either Government. Her Majesty's Government will give the fullest consideration to any representations, not inconsistent with the Treaty obligations of this country and of the colony, which may be made to them from Newfoundland on the lobster fishery question, and hope shortly to hear from the Colonial Delegates what proposals they desire to make.

Dr. TANNER: When will the Delegates come over?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I do not know; but I have seen a statement that they will leave shortly.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS AT LISCARD, CHESHIRE.

Colonel COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will cause further inquiry to be made into the Postal arrangements for the delivery of letters in Liscard, Cheshire; and whether, as that district contains now over 30,000 inhabitants, he will consider if he cannot establish a head Post Office there instead of having it worked as a sub-office of Birkenhead, as it is at the present time?

*Mr. RAIKES: I am not aware that any change is required at Liscard in addition to that of which I informed my hon. Friend in my letter of the 18th instant. If, however, he will communicate with me respecting any further improvement which he considers to be needed, the matter shall receive my attention. It is not proposed to establish a Head Post Office at Liscard, as the change would entail additional expense without sufficient corresponding advantage either to the public or to the Post Office.

SUPERIOR OFFICERS ON THE POST OFFICE MINOR ESTABLISHMENT.

Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether Superior Officers on the minor establishment in the Post Office are allowed to openly compete for appointments on the major establishment in their own Departments; and, if not, why not?

*Mr. RAIKES: Different appointments are entered under different standards of examination, and without a fresh examination a man who has entered the Service under one standard cannot pass to an appointment which is entered by another and higher standard. But, of course, no one, provided he is within the prescribed limits of age, is prevented from taking part in an open competition.

SHERIFF CLERK OF AYRSHIRE.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether in filling up the vacant highly-paid office of Sheriff Clerk of Ayrshire, care will be taken that the person appointed shall not only discharge the duties of the office in person, but shall be prohibited from engaging in any other business?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): In recent cases of filling up appointments of the importance of the one referred to in this question the points mentioned by the hon. Member have been given effect to. As regards this particular office, which has just fallen vacant, it would be premature for me to say more than that these points will receive the usual careful consideration.

DEMOLITION OF A HINDOO TEMPLE AT DURBUNGA.

MR. KEAY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he has now received the particulars regarding the demolition of a Hindoo Temple at Durbunga, the responsibility for which was accepted by Mr. Beadon, the civil officer of the district; whether he has noticed a telegram from the Calcutta correspondent of the *Daily News*, published on 19th instant, stating that the Hindoo community are not satisfied with the decision of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, removing Mr. Beadon to another district, and demand that he should be punished; whether this Mr. Beadon is the same officer who, when Acting Deputy Commissioner at Hazareebagh, was severely censured by order of the Secretary of State for India in consequence of his action in what was known as the "Hazareebagh Gaol Case," and directed to make a full apology to the Gaol Superintendent, whom he had wrongfully accused of tampering with the official records under his charge; and whether he will make inquiry into the conduct and antecedents of the officer in question, with the view of determining whether mere removal to another district is sufficient punishment for his conduct in the present case?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has received no official information respecting the demolition of the Indian Temple at Durbunga. His attention has been called to the telegram only by the question. The facts stated respecting Mr. Beadon are not correct. The matter occurred more than 15 years ago. Mr. Beadon was not censured by the Secretary of State, nor ordered to apologise for making a wrongful accusation. The Secretary of State sees no reason for his interference in the matter.

THE AUSTRALIAN AND INDIAN MAILS.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether proposals were made to the Australian Colonies some time ago to the effect that the rates both out and home might with advantage be reduced to 3d. per letter by the direct ocean route, and declined; whether the Colonies were unanimous in their decision; and whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to reduce the outward rate by all routes to 2½d. per letter in the event of the refusal of the Colonies and India to make a similar reduction homewards?

*MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, may I ask if he is aware that the Australian people and Press are strongly in favour of the reduction, and that the Australian Chancellors of the Exchequer opposed it simply upon fiscal grounds, sitting as tightly on the Australian Treasury Chests as an English Chancellor of the Exchequer does here?

*MR. RAIKES: The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. H. Heaton) is perhaps not aware that to-morrow I am to have an official interview with the Representatives of the Australian Colonies. Under those circumstances, I do not think it is desirable to enter further into the question which he has raised. In reply to the question upon the Paper, I have to say that in 1887 proposals were made to the Australasian Colonies to institute a 3d. or 4d. postage on letters forwarded between this country and the Colonies, in both directions, by the all sea route. My own wish was to establish a 3d. rate, but, at a Conference held in Sydney, the Colonies adopted a Resolution in favour of a 4d. rate; and, in deference to their wishes, that rate was adopted. As regards the last part of the hon. Member's question, I am not in a position to add anything to the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his recent Budget Speech.

THE BOUNDARIES COMMISSION (SCOTLAND.)

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that the Boundary Commissioners for Scotland, at their sitting held at Duns on the 14th ultimo, intimated that, in their opinion, they had no power to deal with the boundaries of counties except in the case of detached portions; and whether this intimation is in accordance with the provisions of Section 45 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, and with his own statements as to the powers and duties of the Boundary Commission made in the House of Commons on 8th April, 1889?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I am informed by the Chairman of the Boundary Commission that the Commissioners did not make the broad statement contained in the first branch of the question. The import of the Commissioners' statement was, that they did not propose to undertake a general straightening of overhauling of county boundaries, although they were prepared to deal with them in instances where, owing to parishes being situated in more counties than one, or owing to the detachment of parts of counties and parishes, such a rectification seemed to be necessary or advantageous.

THE *CITY OF PARIS*.

Mr. GROTRIAN (Hull, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is the intention of the Board of Trade to order an official investigation into the serious accident which recently occurred to the steamship *City of Paris*; if so, to what tribunal it is proposed to refer this important case, in which not only the lives of several hundred persons were imperilled, and property to the value of about £250,000 involved, but which must, of necessity, embrace technical details of very great intricacy, and whether, in the event of the judgment of the Court being against the owners, builders, officers, and crew of the vessel, or any of them, there is or will be in either case any right of appeal; and, if so, to what Court?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): An official investigation has been ordered before a Wreck Court, composed of the Stipendiary Magistrate at Liverpool and skilled assessors. The officers will have a right of appeal to the Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice if the Wreck Court suspends or cancels their certificates, but not otherwise.

THE IMPERIAL DEFENCE ACT.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the amount which it is estimated has been expended under the Imperial Defence Act in fortifications in the year 1889-90, and how much it is estimated will be expended in the year 1890-91?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: The expenditure on fortifications under the Imperial Defence Act has been for 1889-90 approximately £320,000, and for 1890-91 it is estimated at £400,000?

PROHIBITION OF MEETINGS OF POST OFFICE OFFICIALS.

Mr. ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, with reference to a Circular purporting to be issued by him, forbidding certain meetings of the officers of the Post Office, whether he will suspend the operation of the Order until the Departmental Committee which, on the 15th inst., he informed the House had been appointed to examine the grievances put forward by the telegraph clerks, have reported on the matter; and whether that Committee's Report will be laid before the House?

*Mr. C. GRAHAM: Will the Postmaster General communicate to the House the full and exact terms of the notice issued recently with reference to the holding of meetings by Postal *employés*; and will he state the authority by which he is entitled to prohibit postmen from meeting to discuss their grievances, or to insist upon Government shorthand writers being present at such meetings?

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): Has the Postmaster General prohibited meetings of telegraphists, sorters, and postmen outside the Post Office building for the discussion of official questions, except under certain conditions; and is it one of those conditions that "an official shorthand writer be present if required by the authorities"?

*Mr. RAIKES: What has been done has been to relax the rule of the Service on the subject of meetings outside the Post Office building for the discussion of official questions, not to make the rule more stringent, and at the same time to make it known to the telegraphists, who appear to have had no intimation of it before, that from this rule they are not exempt. The conditions on which Post Office servants are now allowed to meet are—(1) that ample notice be given to the Local Post Office Authority that such a meeting will be held, and where it is proposed to hold it; (2) that the meeting will be confined to Post Office servants, and to those Post Office servants only, who are directly interested in the matter or matters to be discussed; (3) that an official shorthand writer be present if required by the authorities. I see no reason for suspending the operation of this rule, which is far less stringent than the one it supersedes. Although it would be contrary to precedent, and obviously most inconvenient to the Public Service, to communicate to Parliament any confidential Papers prepared by the Department for Departmental use, I shall, of course, be glad to lay upon the Table such documents as embody the decisions at which the Government may arrive.

Replying to a further question by Mr. C. Graham,

Mr. RAIKES said: It is certainly my object to confine the meetings to Post Office servants. I wish to protect the Public Service and the State from the incursion of agitators, either hired or otherwise; and with regard to the other part of the hon. Member's question, I have only to say that my wish is that the Department may be accurately informed of the grievances which are alleged at these meetings. With that object it is desirable there should be an authentic report of what takes place at the meetings; but the Post Office servants are, and must be, well aware that to statements made *bonâ fide* and couched in proper and suitable language, as I am sure they will be, no serious consequences can be attached.

In further reply to Mr. C. Graham and Mr. Fenwick.

*Mr. RAIKES said: Because this rule is entirely adapted to the persons who are in the service of the State, and my only wish is that accurate information should be obtained of the discussions at these meetings; and I am quite sure that

the fact that an authentic report is made of the meetings will keep within bounds the rhetoric of some of the gentlemen who address the meetings, and that they will confine themselves to the statement of ascertained facts.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Is it a rule of the Service that none of the officials shall attend Party or political meetings?

*Mr. RAIKES: I do not think there is any rule which prevents an official attending a Party meeting; but there has always been a very clear understanding that they should not take any active part in them.

Sir W. LAWSON: Under these circumstances, is it true that the right hon. Gentleman himself attended a political meeting?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: In consequence of the unsatisfactory reply given by the Postmaster General as to the Circular which he has issued respecting the meetings of Post Office servants to discuss official question, I shall on the Post Office Vote call further attention to the matter, and by moving a reduction of the right hon. Gentleman's salary give the House an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion on the subject.

TRINIDAD.

Mr. ESSLEMONT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State has given instructions that education in Trinidad shall neither be compulsory or free?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Secretary of State has expressed his concurrence in the opinion of the Governor of Trinidad that, in the circumstances of the Colony, it is not yet practicable to introduce compulsory education, and that moderate school fees should continue to be charged, except for the children of Indian Immigrant labourers and of parents who are too poor to pay them.

INHABITED HOUSE DUTY.

Mr. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the case of the alterations in the amount of the Inhabited House Duty, making it 2d. and 4d. for shops and houses between the annual values of £20 and £40, and 4d. and 6d. for shops and houses between the annual values of £40 and £60, it is intended to provide that the amounts of £40 and £60 shall be inclusive respectively ?

*MR. GOSCHEN : The amounts of £40 and of £60 are respectively inclusive ; but the duty on houses between £20 and £40 is reduced to 3d., not, as I said in my Financial Statement, to 4d.

THE CUSTOMS.

MR. KELLY : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is the fact that the question of the re-organisation of the Statistical Department of the Customs has been under the consideration of the Treasury for nearly three years ; what is the reason for such prolonged delay; and whether he can fix the date at which a final settlement of the question may be expected ?

MR. JACKSON : The Report of the Departmental Committee on the Statistical Department of the Customs was received in 1888. I think it only right to say that the postponement of a decision on the recommendations of the Committee has not been due to any delay on the part of the Treasury, but to the necessity of first deciding questions suggested by the Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments. I am glad, however, now to be in a position to say that an agreement has practically been arrived at between the Commissioners of Customs and the Treasury as regards the future status and rates of pay of the men engaged on statistical abstracting, and that the agreement now only requires to be put into formal shape.

THE REV. S. F. GREEN.

MR. WARDLE (Derbyshire, S.) : My question, I notice, has been considerably altered, but I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Rev. Sydney Faithorne Green, who was deprived of the living of St. John's, Miles Platting, in 1882, for wilful disobedience to the laws of the Church of England, was in 1886 licensed by the Bishop of London to St. John Baptist's, Kensington, where unlawful ritual is in use, and that, notwithstanding this continued defiance of Her Majesty's Ecclesiastical Courts, the same clergyman has been instituted to the benefice of Charlton-in-Dover, and is there continuing the same unlawful practices, which formed the ground of his removal from Miles Platting ; and, if so, whether the Government is prepared to take any action, by legislation or otherwise, in the matter ?

MR. MATTHEWS : I am informed by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury that Mr. Green was instituted last year to the benefice of Charlton-in-Dover on the presentation of Keble College, Oxford, and on the production of proper testimonials. The Archbishop has no information as to any illegal practices at Charlton. I am also informed that this gentleman was never licensed to St. John Baptist's, Kensington. That church was not consecrated in the year 1886. It was merely a proprietary chapel. It is not the intention of the Government to take any action in the matter.

THE DUTY ON CURRANTS AND TEA.

MR. OLDROYD (Dewsbury) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, having regard to the large stocks of currants now in the hands of the trade, he will consider the expediency of deferring the reduction of the duty on currants until Monday, the 1st of September, the date at which the importation of the new crop practically commences ?

*MR. GOSCHEN : I hope the House will allow me to answer this question somewhat fully, as I have received an enormous number of letters and telegrams on the subject. I have done my best to see what would be the fairest manner of acting under the circumstances with regard to this reduction of the duty on currants ; and I have distinctly come to the conclusion that it would be a great mistake, and would hamper business in a manner not to be sanctioned, if a postponement to the 1st of September were to take place. I have taken the opinion not only of importers and of wholesale men, but also of grocers and retailers in various parts of the country. The stocks are unusually low ; and if a postponement to the 1st of September takes place it would disorganise the whole of the trade and would diminish the consumption of the article, while it is doubtful even whether it would benefit the people who ask for the postponement. The majority of the comparatively small number who ask for the extension are Co-operative Societies. I should be very sorry to inflict any loss upon these Societies, but they are precisely the bodies who can best recoup themselves; because, if they reduce the price of currants while they have got duty-paid stocks at the higher duty, their members, if they lose as co-operators, would gain as consumers at the cheaper price. So it strikes me that the loss would not be so great as these Societies anticipate. At all events, the general upshot of the inquiries is that it would be impossible to grant the long delay which has been asked for. Comparatively few demands have been made for an extension of a fortnight or a month. Practically the same considerations apply to the reduction of the Tea Duty; but the enormous majority of the grocers who have been consulted, and of all persons connected with the trade, beg me not to postpone the reduction of the duty beyond the 1st of May. Many of them have already made their arrangements, and in many cases the prices have already been reduced. I have been informed, and believe, that great confusion would arise from any change in the dates originally fixed. The allowance of a drawback in the case of tea and currants would be quite out of the question. I hope that hon. Members will allow me to make this public answer to the numerous private communications that have been made to me on these subjects.

THE GOLD PLATE DUTY.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has come to any decision as to the abolition of the duty on gold plate?

*MR. GOSCHEN: No, Sir; I have not come to any final conclusion on that point.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. ASHER (Elgin, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Scheme of the Educational Endowment (Scotland) Commissioners for the management of the endowments known as the Redhythe Bursaries, George Smith's Bounty, and the Stuart Mortification, in the County of Banff, as submitted by the Commissioners for the approval of the Scotch Education Department, was, in consequence of an interview between a deputation from the burghs and County

of Banff and the Secretary for Scotland, remitted by the Department to the Commissioners, with a declaration that the Scheme should provide for the bursaries being tenable, with the consent of the Governors, at any school where higher instruction is efficiently given, which the bursar could attend while living with parents or relatives; whether the Scheme re-submitted by the Commissioners to the Scotch Education Department contained that provision, and was then approved by the Department; and whether he will state why he, as the representative of the Scotch Education Department, supported the Motion of the hon. Baronet the Member for Ipswich, to omit that clause from the Scheme?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: In consequence of the representations made as to the prevalent local feeling, the Department gave effect to the views of the deputation to which the hon. Member refers, and the Scheme was remitted to the Commissioners, and approved with this change. But the question was admittedly one open to doubt, and the Department has given effect to the change with much hesitation. It subsequently appeared that very strong objection was entertained to the change by the people of Fordyce; and, in these circumstances, the Government felt it right to leave it to the House to form its own judgment upon the arguments placed before it. With reference to the last paragraph, I have to say that I voted with my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich, because, the question having been legitimately opened for Parliamentary re-consideration, I thought he had made out his case. The hon. and learned Gentleman will not expect me within the limits of an answer to give a *resumè* of the argument which convinced me, as I doubt not it would have convinced him, had he been present.

THE SPIRIT DUTIES.

DR. CAMERON: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amount of duty levied per gallon of proof spirit contained in beer and in spirits respectively; the amount per gallon of proof spirits contained in beer, represented by the 3d. per barrel which it is proposed under his Budget scheme to allocate to local purposes; and the amount of Spirit and of Beer Duty paid during the last financial year by England, Scotland, and Ireland, respectively?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The figures of the amount of duty levied in England, Scotland, and Ireland, will not help the hon. Member in arriving at the result which he desires to attain, as they represent production and export, not consumption. He is further attempting to institute a comparison which is misleading when he compares the duty charged on spirits and that levied on beer by taking the spirit contained in the latter as a basis for calculation. The modes of levying the duties on beer and spirits are essentially different. The duty on beer, an article of consumption, which, to some extent, is of a nutritious nature, is charged according to the specific gravity of the original wort or extract from which the beer is made, without reference to the quantity of spirits subsequently generated therein; while the duty on spirits, which are pure intoxicants, is charged on the quantity of proof spirit produced by the distillation of a fermented saccharine liquid.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer the number of gallons of home-made spirits on which duty has been paid "retailed for consumption as beverages" in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively, for the past financial year; whether he is aware that Scotland consumes close on three times as much home spirits as England in proportion to the population; whether the duty on home spirits is more than double the duty on other alcoholic beverages; and whether of the £1,304,000 to be set aside as grants in aid of local taxation the larger amount per head per population will be payable by Scotland?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The consumption of British spirits was in 1889-90—England, 16,854,000 gallons, equal to ·57 per head; Scotland, 6,264,000 gallons, equal to 1·53 per head; Ireland, 4,711,000 gallons. The consumption of this one kind of spirits is therefore in Scotland almost three times that in England; but, of course, the proportionate consumption of foreign spirits in the three parts of the United Kingdom is of a totally different character. The duty on home spirits is, of course, practically the same as that on foreign spirits. It is probable that Scotland will contribute a somewhat larger amount per head of the population to this particular sum.

Mr. R. CHAMBERLAIN (Islington, W.): I should like to ask whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer will consent to issue the continuation of the interesting curve published last year showing the consumption of spirits, beer, and tea for a considerable number of years?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I do not object in the least to produce such a Report.

SCOTCH EDUCATION GRANT.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether his attention has been drawn to the disappointment caused by the amount received by certain School Boards in Scotland from the Probate Grant being so much less than the amount receivable from fees as formerly charged in the schools comprised in these districts?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The question of the distribution of the sum to be given in aid of local burdens in Scotland is not a matter within the special province of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is, however, being carefully considered by the Scotch Office and by Her Majesty's Government as a whole.

INHABITED HOUSE DUTY.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman if, in defining the classes of lodging and boarding houses which he proposes shall be taxed to the Inhabited House Duties at the lower rate as trade premises, he will consider the claims of schoolmasters and others, who make their livelihood by keeping boarding houses for boys, to share in the proposed exemption?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: One of the greatest difficulties attending the grant of such concessions as I have proposed to make to lodging-house keepers is that it at once leads to further demands, which again are followed by others. If schoolmasters were allowed to pay the lower duty as having trade premises, I feel confident that further questions would be opened up. The line between shops and houses is very difficult to draw. I will consider the point, but without holding out much hope that consideration will lead to consent. If the hon. Member will remember what took place on the Horse Tax he will understand my difficulty.

THE WOOD GREEN LOCAL BOARD ELECTION.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the following irregularities which took place at the election of the Local Board for Wood Green, owing to the Returning Officer not performing his duties, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Health Act; that, while voting papers were taken from the same list of voters as that in use for the election of Guardians, hundreds of ratepayers were left out for the former but were included in the latter, the Returning Officer himself being a candidate in the latter case, and the election taking place within a few days of the same time; that the Returning Officer sat and gave out papers after they had been collected from the ratepayers, whereas the Act provides that such application must be made before the day of collection (Rule 49, section (a) Public Health Act); that, on the day of election, before the counting of votes was commenced, the Returning Officer caused candidates to be removed by the police simply because they had agents present; that one candidate was removed because he asked a question before the counting began, and that the counting of votes was performed in such a manner that neither candidates nor agents were able to verify the votes in any way, although the number of voting papers declared invalid was abnormally large; and whether, if these facts were corroborated, he would institute an inquiry into the case?

*MR. RITCHIE: The Local Government Board have no jurisdiction whatever with regard to the election of members of a Local Board. If it is considered that a person who has been returned by the Returning Officer has not been duly elected, the question as to the validity of the election can be raised by an Election Petition under the Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any special instructions were given to the Wood Green police during the recent local elections; and, if so, on what grounds?

*MR. MATTHEWS: The answer to the hon. Member's question is in the negative.

VACCINATION IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether an Inspector has been recently sent into the Eastern Counties to investigate certain allegations of injuries arising from certain vaccinations performed by Dr. Masson, public vaccinator, or his substitute; whether the Inspector's Report has been received, and if he will cause such Report to be at once furnished to the Royal Commission on Vaccination; and whether, in the event of future cases of evils alleged to result from vaccination being brought to the notice of the Local Government Board, he will cause notice to be at once given to the Royal Commission?

*MR. RITCHIE: The Local Government Board have instructed one of their Inspectors to investigate the allegations of injuries arising from vaccination which are referred to. The Report of the Inspector has not yet been received. The facts, when ascertained, will be communicated to the Royal Commission on Vaccination. As regards the third question, the Board will be happy to meet, as far as they can, any wish which the Royal Commission may express on the matter.

PRISON ACCOMMODATION AT BURY ST. EDMUNDS.

LORD ELCHO (Ipswich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, although there is no prison accommodation at Bury St. Edmunds, Assizes are still held there; whether it has been brought to his notice that untried and often innocent prisoners are publicly taken by rail in chained gangs from the Court Gaol at Ipswich to the Assizes at Bury; whether William Cocker, an Ipswich labourer, with other similar cases, was last November taken backwards and forwards in chains on three successive days before he was finally acquitted, the crime of which he was accused having been cutting the moorings of a tug; and whether Her Majesty's Government would take immediate steps to put an end to such practices, either by doing away with the Assizes at Bury, or by seeing that prison accommodation was provided there?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The fact is as stated in the first paragraph. I have some time back called the attention of the Prison Commissioners to the subject of the conveyance of prisoners to Bury, and the Prison Commissioners have lately entered into arrangements with the Railway Authorities which I hope will prevent the prisoners brought from Ipswich from being exposed to the public gaze in the future, either on leaving or entering the railway carriage. I have no information with regard to the case of William Cocker. There are difficulties in the way of doing away with the Assizes at Bury, and I have lately received a Resolution of the West Suffolk County Council protesting against any such change. The subject is still under consideration.

Lord ELCHO: I beg to give notice that I will repeat the question in another form at the earliest possible opportunity.

RELIEF OF EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he is able to state, either accurately or approximately, the relief given in each of the five compulsory Standards throughout Scotland by the substitution of the educational portion of the Probate Grant for the fees formerly charged?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: There are no materials enabling me to make such a statement. The payment under the Local Government Act is a capitation grant on the total average attendance in schools. The extent of relief of fees to parents is settled by the term of the Code, which, with certain exceptions, requires that such relief shall prevail over the compulsory Standards. But the pecuniary effect of this as regards each Standard depends upon circumstances which vary with each particular school.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (in the absence of Mr. Keay): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, with reference to Return No. 130, of 1890, which gives the particulars of the Irish Church Temporalities Fund on the expenditure side of the account only, whether he will likewise give particulars of the income of the Fund, stated at present to amount to £550,000, but described as declining gradually to £266,000; and whether, in giving such particulars, he will indicate the items of income which are "permanent" and those which are "temporary"?

*Mr. JACKSON: If the hon. Member will confer with me, and state under what heads he thinks that the information that he desires might be arranged, I shall be glad to see whether it can conveniently be given.

NEW GOLD COIN.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the prospect of a great issue of new gold coin to replace the present light gold, he will take measures to procure an improved design for the future gold coinage?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: A new design for the head of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen is under consideration. As for the reverse, nothing, in my opinion, is more handsome than the St. George and the Dragon, and we should propose to retain it.

THE POLICE BUILDINGS ON THE EMBANKMENT.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works who is reponsible for the design and elevation of the new police buildings on the Thames Embankment?

*The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, Dublin University): The new police buildings on the Embankment are built under the authority and direction of the Secretary for the Home Department.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I should like to know whether the First Commissioner of Works does not exercise a general authority over a considerable number of public buildings, and whether the buildings in question represented the accepted views of the Secretary of State?

*Mr. PLUNKET: It is true that I exercise a general authority over a certain number of public buildings, and whatever I do I am abused for it. I prefer to express no opinion about the buildings on the Embankment.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to these buildings on the Home Office Vote.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN MALTA.

MR. HUNTER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the appointment of Mr. Nandi, Dr. Grech, and Baron Chapelle as representative members of the Executive Council in Malta, has been approved or confirmed by Her Majesty's Government?

BARON H. DE WORMS: After the General Election of the Malta Council of Government last year, Baron Chapelle and two other elected members who belonged to the Party which had obtained a majority in the Council were appointed by the Governor members of the Executive Council, and their appointment was confirmed by the Queen. These gentlemen recently resigned their seats in the Executive Council, and other members of the same Party having declined to succeed them, Dr. Nandi, Dr. Grech, and Mr. Cachia Zammit, who do not belong to that Party, were appointed by the Governor to the vacant seats. Subsequently three members of the Party, having a majority in the Council of the Government, were willing to become members of the Executive Council, and thereupon Dr. Nandi, Dr. Grech, and Mr. Cachia Zammit resigned their seats. In these circumstances, while Her Majesty's Government approved the appointment of these gentlemen, and recognise their loyal action, they have not advised Her Majesty formally to confirm it.

MR. HUNTER: On what date did the resignations take place?

BARON H. DE WORMS: I cannot give the hon. Member the date, but it is quite recent. If he will put a question on the Paper, I will answer it.

THE PRAYER BOOK.

MR. WARDLE: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney General how soon the "exact copy of the Prayer Book, annexed to the Act of Uniformity," is likely to be issued to the public?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode inform me that they will be able to publish the edition of the Prayer Book referred to early in 1891; but that it is difficult to state exactly how soon the work will be completed, as the time required must depend on the period the proofs are kept. The work is, however, making satisfactory progress.

POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS IN THE POSTAL SERVICE.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the widespread feeling of dissatisfaction that prevails with regard to the system of political appointments in the Postal Service, he will consider the advisability of taking such appointments out of the hands of the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, and of placing them entirely in the hands of the Department that is responsible for the efficient administration of the Service in question?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Government are not in possession of any facts to show that any such widespread dissatisfaction exists; but if the hon. Member will bring forward any facts in support of his allegation, the matter shall receive the best consideration of the Government.

THE TOWN HOLDINGS COMMITTEE.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government intend to introduce any legislation to carry out the unanimous recommendations of the Town Holdings Committee, which reported last year in favour of the exercise by Local Authorities of powers which would facilitate the acquisition by leaseholders, especially of the industrial classes, of the freehold of their dwelling-houses, and to the effect that all Religious Bodies to whom land has been granted on lease for the erection of their places of worship and schools, should be empowered to purchase the fee subject to payment of fair compensation?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not aware that any recommendations of the Committee were unanimous. But whether that is so or not, I am not able to undertake that legislation on these lines will be proposed by the Government during this Session, especially as the Town Holdings Committee have not completed the whole of their duties.

THE EIGHT HOURS BILL FOR MINERS.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can now promise a day for the discussion of the Eight Hours Bill for Miners?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I understand that an Eight Hours Bill is in charge of some Member on the other side of the House, and I hope he will find an opportunity of securing a discussion on this question in the House before the end of the Session. But I am not able at present to undertake to give it any Government time.

*Mr. C. GRAHAM: I should like to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the day on which this Bill was put down has already passed, and whether, as the Bill excites great interest in the mining community, he will re-consider his decision?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I know the mining community of Great Britain take an interest in this question; but there are other questions in which the community at large take a deep interest, and I am not able to make an exception in favour of this particular Bill at the present time.

LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER PARCELS POST.

Mr. J. ROBERTS (Flint, &c.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the estimated cost of the nightly service of the three horsed parcel van recently started between Liverpool and Manchester, and how does it compare with the cost of the conveyance of the same parcel by rail?

Mr. RAIKES: The cost of the Parcel Service by road is estimated at £2,659, and the cost of the corresponding service by railway at £3,016 a year.

THE DONEGAL CROWN SOLICITOR.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to a criminal prosecution against Mr. John Mackey, Sessional Crown Solicitor, County Donegal, and to his admissions and statements made on oath at Petty Sessions in Ramelton, County Donegal, on 29th March last; whether he is aware that Mr. Mackey swore that he would have run a sword through the body of Hugh Hegarty, complainant in the said action, if he had resisted arrest, because his (Mr. Mackey's) pane of glass, value 1s. 6d., had been accidentally broken, and that the summons which Mr. Mackey issued against Hegarty, under the Malicious Injuries Act, for breaking his window, was dismissed by the Magistrates; whether Mr. Mackey reported the matter, the occurrence at his own house, to the Government; and, if so, what is the date of the Report; and whether he is still in the Service of the Crown?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not seen an authoritative report of the evidence in the case referred to, which, it appears, is still *sub judice*, having been adjourned to the Petty Sessions to be held on Saturday next. I cannot establish the precedent of making a statement in regard to an official communication alleged to have passed between this officer and the Government, which, did it exist, would necessarily be regarded as of a privileged character. The reply to the last paragraph is in the affirmative.

THE RAILWAY STRIKE IN IRELAND—SOLDIERS AS RAILWAY PORTERS.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Report is true that the Military Authorities at Spike Island have agreed to send a company of soldiers to act as porters for the Great Southern and Great Western Railway Companies of Ireland, at the Queenstown terminus, to replace the *employés* of the company on strike; and, if so, whether such employment of soldiers has the sanction and approval of the War Office?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: I have no information on the subject; but I have telegraphed to Ireland to ascertain the facts.

Dr. TANNER: I should like to ask the Attorney General for Ireland, or the Chief Secretary, whether the Central News report is correct that the afternoon passenger train for Dublin has been despatched by soldiers?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no information on the subject.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRADE, &c.

Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Trade, &c., have leave to print and circulate with the Votes from day to day any amended Clauses of Bills committed to them from time to time.—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Seventh Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

LAND COMMISSION (IRELAND)

Return ordered—

"Showing the dates of the last sittings of the Land Courts in each county in Ireland, with the number of applications for judicial rents undisposed of in each county on the 31st day of March, specifying how many of these applications are more than six months old:—

Province.

County.

Date of last sitting of Court.

Number of applications undisposed of on the 31st day of March, 1890.

Number of these applications which were then more than six months old.

—(*Mr. John Ellis.*)

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) (PLEURO-PNEUMONIA) [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of an annual sum, not exceeding £140,000, towards defraying the cost of the execution, in Great Britain, of any Act of the present Session for conferring further powers under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, 1878 to 1886, with respect to Pleurp-pneumonia; and of an annual sum, not exceeding £20,000, towards defraying the costs of the execution of the said Act in Ireland.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL. (No. 199.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [21st April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and, at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

(4.53.) MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I wish in the first place to make my acknowledgments to the courtesy of my hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Knox) in having allowed me to take this early opportunity of making known my views on this important question. Sir, it is with very mixed sentiments that I rise to express my opinion—mixed in this manner: that I deeply regret to find myself compelled to oppose a Bill which it would have given me far greater satisfaction to support, had I not been driven by overwhelming conviction to offer opposition to it. I had hoped, and entertained a lively hope, that it might be possible for us on this side of the House to give support to the plan of the Government. I was encouraged in that hope by the remarkable declaration of Lord Salisbury, about which, as a matter of fact, I believe there is no question, that the plan of the Government was not intended to impose any burden on the British taxpayer. According to Parliamentary and invariable usage there can be only one meaning assigned to these words. They are totally incompatible with any intention to propose a heavy engagement of the public credit. They were so understood universally, and by myself amongst others. It would have been a very great advantage on many grounds if it had been possible for us to see the land question in Ireland, in familiar phrase, "got out of the way." Every such question, however there may be involved in it principles of justice and right as against oppression, yet likewise tends to stir up the turbid elements of society, and those who have no good cause for making demands on the landlord can often bring forward a claim in such circumstances, under cover of those who have such a cause. It is very well that the country should have seen brought finally to issue the question whether—as is often alleged, and, as I think, believed, on the opposite side of the House—the land question is the only question in Ireland, and the demand for national self-government merely an appendage to that question. It would have been most satisfactory to me, and I believe to others who think that national self-government ought to be granted to Ireland for Irish affairs, to have seen that important point relieved from all possibility of doubt and dispute by some satisfactory legislation with regard to Irish land. With regard to this Bill, the Chief Secretary, who in his speech repeated the assurance that no burden was to be placed on the taxpayer, must have seen from the reception of those words in what sense they were understood by the House. My first disappointment as to the Bill was when he proceeded to inform us what was the real meaning of the words—that the credit of the country was to be pledged to the extent of £33,000,000 for the sake of carrying through the provisions of the Bill. I should not, Sir, have been deterred from supporting this Bill by the argument offered by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), though I admit there is great force in it. He said, and I think with truth, that we cannot, with perfect satisfaction, approach the settlement of a question of this kind as long as Ireland is under the present Coercion Laws, because the effect of those laws is to disable the weaker portion of the Irish tenantry from prosecuting their aims by peaceable and lawful means, and by what were lawful means, and, by what would be lawful means in England or Scotland, from entering into a combination, which is a legitimate weapon in their hands, for determining the just amount of rent they ought to pay. Still, I was quite prepared to enter upon the consideration of this question on the introduction of the Bill. I endeavoured to do justice to the pains bestowed upon it, to the ingenuity which it displays, and in no respect do I retract what I said upon that occasion. I waited to examine the Bill, still cherishing what hope I could; but I am sorry to say that examination has brought upon me my second and my greater disappointment. One word I must say with respect to the alternative plan which has been proposed by the hon. Member for Cork. I think his conduct in making that proposal was not only honourable, but even chivalrous, because he appeared to admit that a person who is in opposition, may fairly be called upon by the Government, if he objects to a measnre of the Government, to propose an alternative measure of his own. That is a principle, I think, new to this House. The hon. Member accepted it at the same time without hesitation. Now, Sir, it would not be possible to discuss in detail the plan of the hon. Member, and I am not certain that in all its details I have a perfect comprehension of it. [*Ministerial laughter.*] I have no doubt it was my own fault; but the statement was a very brief one, and while the general purpose was clear, the exact terms are not, certainly, fully in my mind. But on two points I wish to do justice to the plan. In the first place, it was comprehensive; it was intended to effect a settlement of the whole question. In another point I strongly sympathise with the hon. Member for Cork. One object of his plan was not to expatriate the Irish landlords, but to retain them in Ireland; and I, for my part, am of opinion that though the expatriation of the Irish landlords may be a less evil than many others—for instance, than a continuance of the land system as it once was—would have been, yet I own that I think it would be a sorry conclusion to their long career if, upon the establishment of a free Government and of free institutions in their country, they were to decline to take that part in the adjustment of the affairs of Ireland which their station entails upon them as a high and absolute duty. I am glad to observe that the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland, as I understood, in no way took exception to this principle of the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork, and I think a well-known Irish County Court Judge, Mr. O'Connor Morris—a gentleman who, though an excellent public officer, is known to be a supporter of hon. Gentlemen opposite in regard to Home Rule for Ireland—has propounded a plan based on the same ideas. I do trust that we may have full opportunity for the consideration of such features of the plan as would tend to the retention of Irish landlords in Ireland, as well as to the adjustment of the land question. I am sorry to say that, partly perhaps owing to my own fault, I did not fully gather from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland in introducing this Bill its real character in regard to several important points. I shall go over very rapidly the objections to various points which appear to me capable of being dealt with in

Committee, and I shall avoid the inconvenience of entering unduly, in a Second Reading speech, into details which can be dealt with in Committee. Over this class of objections I shall run rapidly, though some of them are so serious in themselves as possibly to constitute valid objections to the Second Reading of the Bill. The first objection is one on which probably there may be a disposition on the part of Her Majesty's Government to come to an agreement. I think this Bill ought to be confined to landlords who are already such. It would be highly improper to encourage persons to become buyers of land with a view to taking advantage of the enormous boon which is being offered. I shall not dwell on this point, because I hope it may not be a subject of dispute between us. Next there is the question of arrears. I shall not dwell on this point at length after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division; but anyone who heard the right hon. Gentleman's remarks in regard to the proposal to allow two years' arrears to be calculated in the purchase money must, I think, admit that the proposal stands in need of justification, which possibly may be forthcoming. There is very great force in the objection of the hon. Member for Cork in respect to the treatment of tenants of non-selling landlords. That difficulty in the present Bill has been raised to a maximum. It may be said this applied to the proposal of 1886, and it is true that it did apply but in a very mitigated degree, because in the Bill of 1886 we proceeded to take a very large portion of the boon to be conveyed by Parliament, not for the benefit of tenants as tenants, but as benefit for the whole community in Ireland. No less than 18 per cent. was proposed, not to go directly to the tenants, but to the benefit of Ireland, though, of course, it indirectly would have gone to the tenants in some degree, inasmuch as tenants form a large proportion of the population. Well, I own I think it is a very great objection indeed that the benefits proposed by the Bill are given to the two classes of landlords and tenants, and I must say in no degree to the nation. With the exception of a very limited proposal in regard to labourers, and while Ireland as a whole will have her credit pledged, and while the credit of Great Britain is pledged, Ireland as a whole is to receive no portion of this enormous advantage. There is another point which appears to me to be impossible to be defended, and which, indeed, goes so near the root of the Bill as to cause me almost to doubt whether it can be dealt with in Committee. I refer to the method for ascertaining the net rental of the land. The standard laid down in the Bill appears to me to be so bad that it would enable a landlord to obtain compensation in respect of a large part of income that he had never received, and never had it in his power to appropriate to his own benefit and advantage. No reduction is provided to be made for expenses of management, or for law charges—as, for instance, in regard to evictions—or bad debts. Under the Bill the landlord is to be compensated even for bad debts, which have had to be written off, and which are absolutely beyond recovery. I need not say the effect of this is that, when you think you are giving 17 years' purchase, you may be giving 20 or 22 years'. I think these are all elements that ought to be considered in arriving at the real rent. Next, I take the strongest possible objection to our placing an embargo on the local funds of the counties of Ireland. That appears to me to involve a principle which this House ought to hold sacred, and from which it ought never to depart. I am now on a point upon which I stand, perhaps, in need of some information. As I understand the Bill, there is nothing to prevent the occupier who becomes an owner under this measure from himself becoming a landlord.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): He cannot sub-let without the permission of the Land Commission.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Cannot sub-let? Cannot let at all?

MR. MADDEN: He can sell, but he cannot sub-divide or sub-let.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Cannot get an occupier under him?

MR. MADDEN: Hear, hear!

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: But upon what principle is the Land Commission to proceed in granting or refusing such permission? This is a very important point. Is it to be understood as an universal principle of the Bill, that every man who buys, buys under a legal obligation to occupy? It is a question of great importance, upon which there ought to be a clear understanding, which no doubt we shall obtain at the proper time. Now, with regard to the guarantees that the right hon. Gentleman has ingeniously provided, I will not, at the present time, undertake to make a minute examination of them. The really valuable part—indeed, I may say the only valuable part—of those guarantees is to be found in the grants to be made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on account of Probate Duty and other public charges. But we have already given to England and Scotland corresponding grants, free from any lien whatever. How is it possible, if we make a free gift of these grants in England and Scotland, and place them unfettered at the disposal of the Local Authorities—how is it possible for us to say that the grants in the case of Ireland should have this embargo placed upon them, not even for the benefit of each county at large, but for the benefit of certain individuals in each county? There have been at various times violations of the principle of equality as applied to different parts of the three Kingdoms; but I am not aware that we have ever known a more glaring departure from that principle. Another point which I must also mention, though it is one that can be dealt with in Committee, relates to the charges which it is proposed to impose on the counties for the salaries of the Land Commission and the composition of that Commission. These are a very grave assemblage of points, on which, however, I feel that it is not desirable to dwell at length at this moment, as I do not wish to prolong the remarks I have to make, and as there will be an opportunity for the future discussion of them. I come now to objections of which I must frankly own that each and all of them appear to constitute an absolute reason against the Second Reading of this Bill. I have already expressed my desire to discuss this question apart from considerations of Party. I will endeavour to adhere to the principle of that declaration. I will not remind any hon. Member of this House of what it might be inconvenient for him to recollect. I will not remind him intentionally of any portion of the conduct of the Government. It is enough for me to endeavour to look at their propositions as a matter of business, and not as a matter of Party; and to endeavour in that sense, and in that light, to place their character before the country. When this Bill was introduced, I had no reason to know from any communication, direct or indirect, what view would be taken of it by the Representatives of Ireland—whether the £33,000,000 held out would operate as a golden attraction for the purpose of placing in abeyance any objections which they might feel inclined to entertain. I did not say one single word in the course of the remarks which I then made which tended or were meant in any degree to predispose unfavourably the mind of any single person in this House. But, Sir, it became obvious at once that Ireland was opposed to this Bill. I have seen an account of a meeting of Irish landlords, whose position under the Bill it will be our duty closely to examine and carefully to exhibit; but I cannot say that I consider them as having, in reference to this matter, even the smallest title to express the voice of Ireland. For the voice of Ireland I must look to two quarters. I must look, in the first place, to the Members for Ireland, and I suppose that I am quite right in saying that five-sixths of those Members are deliberately and determinedly opposed to this Bill. But this present House is perfectly familiar with the idea of passing Irish Bills in defiance of the wishes of the Irish Members. And, therefore, I never should dream of addressing to this House such an argument—however operative in my own mind—it would be idle to address to this House of Commons such an argument, as that in legislating for Ireland the opinions of the Irish Members should be considered. The contrary practice is recorded in the transactions of the House during the four years in which the present Parliament has sat. But this case is altogether peculiar. You are going to make Ireland a debtor; you are going to constitute a debt of which I have not the smallest doubt that in perfect good faith it is your intention to rigidly exact repayment. But if that is your intention and plan, it is a matter of vital importance to consider what, in the conclusion of this transaction, is the attitude of the person who is about to be made subject to the debt. That person has but two means of speaking. The first, the greatest and the most Constitutional, is by the Members; and if the great bulk of these Members protest against the constitution of this debt—if they decline to recognise it as an obligation—if, on the contrary, they treat the provisions of the measure as a new wrong inflicted on Ireland—I say nothing now as to the correctness or incorrectness of their opinions; I am simply stating the facts, and my proposition is that if you are going to make the people of Ireland your debtor for a sum of about £35,000,000—which, if the Bill be read aright, is a figure which may rise very much higher—it is a most formidable combination of circumstances under which you, by your own choice, involve Ireland in that pecuniary obligation, she protesting all the time, and declining to admit that she is getting value for her money. To illustrate that question I would make an appeal to Her Majesty's Government. Do they think it would be possible, within the widest limits of the widest definition of Parliamentary omnipotence, to enact a law for Scotland which should contain a concession of Imperial credit to the extent of £33,000,000 for the benefit of certain classes in Scotland, and to impose the repayment of that money, in case of default, upon the counties of Scotland, in defiance of the protest of 60 out of the 72 Scotch Members? If a Member of the Government does me the honour to follow me in this debate, I beg him to answer that question. Would he be prepared so to legislate for Scotland, contemplating with perfect good faith the benefit of certain classes in Scotland, and then, by reason of a thing done for the advantage of those classes, imposing upon the counties of Scotland and upon all persons and interests in those counties—though nine-tenths may not have derived a farthing of benefit under the Act—this liability upon them, in defiance of their protest? There is important auxiliary evidence—the evidence of the counties themselves. Is there a single county in Ireland, is there a single elective body in Ireland, which has said one word in favour of the measure? Their credit is about to be interfered with and appropriated by us for purposes of which they do not approve, and I do not hesitate to say that even had I doubts—which I do not entertain—upon the provisions of this Bill, which I shall presently refer to, I should deem it most unconstitutional, most impolitic, to force such a measure upon Ireland in defiance of her own deliberate and overwhelming objection. My second objection is to the use of British credit in this case. I have never been one of those who take an extreme view on the subject of the use of British credit. But I think it is a very grave matter indeed, even when the security taken for the repayment of the money advanced is, in my own judgment at least, an absolute security. I cannot deny that any large use of British credit is a burden upon the country. I should think I was tampering with words, and what is called "throwing dust in the eyes" of those whom I address, if I denied that for a moment. It is quite clear that every large use of British credit diminishes your power of using it in other directions, and how am I to be told, if that is the case—and I believe it to be utterly undeniable—that it is no burden on the people? I do not wish to push this too far. It may be quite right to impose burdens upon the country with the assent of the country and for an adequate object and with ample security. I shall, therefore, avoid any abstract declaration on this subject, but I shall refer to the circumstances in which we stand, and I do not hesitate to say that it appears to me that this Parliament is both in honour and in policy, and upon the clearest Constitutional ground, precluded from a large application of British credit for the purchase of land in Ireland. Remember, if ever there was a question decided at a General Election this question was decided at the General Election of 1886. About the voice of the Party opposite upon it there could not be the slightest doubt. I am not going to make the smallest invidious reference to the benefit which they derived, to the victories which they obtained, through exhibiting the tremendous burden which was to be imposed upon the country by the Land Bill of 1886. And with regard to this subject of the burden upon the country, I must remind the House, it is in all our recollections, that the universal representation was that £100,000,000,

£150,000,000 or £200,000,000 were to be exacted from the British taxpayer for the purchasing the estates of the Irish landlords. That was the case with regard to the Party opposite. It was still more the case with those who still do us the honour of interspersing themselves among us. I think, generally speaking, that they went further and took a more extreme view than the Tories took with respect to this question of the use of British credit for the purchase of Irish estates. I must go further still; I must admit that a very large number of Liberal candidates at the Election declared their opposition to purchase on that basis, and I believe that a still larger number of Liberal constituencies entertained that objection. I do not now enter into the question whether that is a final judgment or not. A judgment may be pronounced very clearly at one General Election, and it may be reversed by another General Election, and I am not at all sure whether this subject of Imperial credit may not possibly add another to the many examples of the truth to which I have just reverted. I am not at all sure whether we ourselves—each of us as individuals—are perfectly capable of giving a final judgment on this question of British credit until we have considered more largely than we have yet done, and until we have obtained more thorough and authoritative information than we yet possess upon the old relations of England and Ireland with respect to finance as they stood at the period of the Union, and with reference to all the expenditure which has been thrown upon Ireland by the Union. But I do say that for this present Parliament, if British credit ever were to be used for the purpose of purchasing those estates, it ought to be under a system of guarantees, I am bound to say, very different indeed from those which are provided in the present case. I do not think that the present Parliament—if there be such a thing as an honourable understanding with the nation—is in a position to adopt the proposals of Her Majesty's Government for setting aside a vast sum of money, and by means of a circulating fund, and therefore with an interminable operation—I do not think that the present Parliament is in a position to take such a step and give such a vote in conformity with our honourable obligations to our constituents. These two objections—the Irish opposition and the use of Imperial credit under the circumstances in which we stand—constitute a conclusive reason why we should not permit the Bill to be read a second time. I now come to the third objection which, in my judgment, is more formidable still, and that is the question of State landlordism. The economical test the right hon. Gentleman has ingeniously covered with a triple front of brass in his three impossibilities. I am afraid that those impossibilities would all be penetrated by pecuniary necessity, as the spears of great warriors used in ancient times to go through the many folds with which shields were covered. I own I do not think the results of present repayments are altogether satisfactory. About 2½ per cent. is the deficit upon the repayment of advances which have been made upon such a scale as evidently not very greatly to compromise the power of the State or to entail any particular danger. The payments under the Acts we have passed up to the present time are 2·4 per cent. in arrears. I do not think that is a brilliant result, when you consider that it is the outcome of measures which involved an enormous pecuniary boon, manufactured out of British credit, to the persons who have directed the sales and purchases in Ireland. It is when from hundreds you come to deal with thousands, and go from thousands to tens of thousands, and from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands, that the mere question of pecuniary risk assumes a totally different aspect. The occurrence of seasons of famine will entail difficulties of which we are not at all competent to measure the extent; but the political danger is, in my opinion, tenfold greater than the economical. I think I may say that nothing will induce me, in a Bill of this kind, on a large scale to incur the political danger of State landlordism in Ireland. It is terrible to contemplate. I suppose that the right hon. Gentleman does not think of coming upon the ratepayers of the country or upon the recipients of the Probate Duty Fund until every measure has been taken against a defaulting occupier, for I assume that the very first thing to be done in the case of default is, in the name of the English

Treasury, to evict the Irish tenants, with the help of the constabulary, the soldiery, and the battering ram, with no aid wanting except that of the emergency man, whom, I presume, the State will not have occasion to employ. I am not willing to be a party to such operations conducted in our name. In a most able pamphlet just published by an hon. Member who promises to be a very considerable addition to our ranks, judging from the argumentative power he shows—I mean the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn (Mr. Keay)—I find some words which the hon Member says were used by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham in 1886. I am quite certain that the hon. Member must be wrong in saying that those words were used by my right hon. Friend; he could not have used those words, because they are totally untrue. There is not a single word of truth in them. The right hon. Gentleman could not have been ignorant of the facts, and, therefore, he could not have used the words. They are directed against State landlordism. In the Bill of 1886 there was nothing affecting England; the Treasury was not the creditor; the British State was not the proprietor; the Irish authority was the proprietor; no power was given to the representatives of the British Exchequer to levy one single shilling towards the recovery of the advances under the Bill, but it was wholly an Irish matter. The equivalent of the Irish advances was simply to be deducted from the gross amount of the public funds of Ireland. Until that had been done not a single shilling was to be applied to expenditure. The passage I am going to quote is, I believe, strictly, literally, and absolutely applicable to the present Bill. There are only three lines, but they are sufficiently pungent, and the virtue of their pungency is to be found in their truth as applied to the Bill now before us. They run—

> "Bear in mind this, working men of England and Scotland, you will be the Irish landlords; you will have to evict the tenants; you will have to collect the arrears at the point of the bayonet; and I refuse to be a party to such a transaction."

In my opinion, Sir, the knowledge—if even the deficiency is only 2½ per cent., or is any percentage whatever — the knowledge that the eviction of the purchasing tenant is by the agency and for the behoof of the British Treasury forms a conclusive objection to any large measure of Irish purchase in which it is included. Now I come to my fourth and last objection, that is to the terms which, when we first heard them, and before it was realised what they meant, were naturally and of necessity almost seductive to the ears of every Member of the House. The terms of purchase were to be adjusted between the landlord and the tenant by voluntary arrangement. There are some of us who are accused of wishing to have voluntary arrangements in certain cases where at present there are legal State arrangements; and on this occasion the friends of voluntary arrangements felt that the statement I have just cited was the best introduction to any measure of this nature. But what is the voluntary arrangement under this Bill? I am bound to think the Government have not sufficiently studied the operation of their voluntary arrangement. I will begin by stating what may seem paradoxical until I have illustrated it, that this provision for voluntary arrangement is a provision under which you will place it in the hands of the landlords of Ireland to transfer to their own pockets, if not the whole, yet nearly the whole of the enormous boon which you think you are providing for the tenant. This is a grave statement, and I could not have made it without being fully convinced of its truth. I first of all assume—what I believe will not be disputed — that this Bill is mainly meant to meet the cases of the tenants who are desirous to buy their holdings in Ireland. I am glad if it is an accommodation to the landlord; but it has always been stated on the other side that to convert occupiers into proprietors is the object they have in view. In order to enable the tenants to buy, what is it that we do? We offer a boon, *primâ facie* a boon which is large, which, if I understand it aright, is enormous. The offered sum of £100 involved in any one of these transactions is, by a touch of the magician's wand, at once reduced to £68. That is how you begin—by a gift of £32 in every £100; £32 of hard money, coined out of British credit, in every £100 of hard money that is to pass. And that is not all; because you likewise provide that the reduced annual payment shall not be a payment in perpetuity, but at the end of 49 years it is to lapse, and the occupying purchaser is to become absolute proprietor. What is the value of that reversion? I am not going to compute it as an actuary would, and say exactly what it would be; but I do not think I am wrong in putting its present value at £8. Therefore, I say that £40 in every £100 upon everyone of these transactions is a boon which you are going to confer upon somebody in Ireland by means of the use of the public credit. To whom are you going to offer it? I do not ask what your intention is—I know it; it is to give it to the man who is now the tenant, and whom you seek to convert into the landlord of his holding. That is your intention. Is it really effected by your legislation? No, Sir. In the former measure what was contemplated was that there should be one integral transaction for the passage of the estate; that the whole of these transactions should be carried on by public advances; and that the landlord should have no more to say to the person who had been occupier and was about to become owner. In the Bill it is totally different. If the terms of the Bill, that the landlord and tenant shall agree, are to be followed, provided the two parties are are not collusive, they will have no effect whatever. In such a matter collusion implies the connivance of both parties to cheat public justice. I am speaking of the enormous leverage you are about to put in the hands of Irish landlords for the purpose of extracting from the tenants nearly the whole of the immense boon which you are offering. Here are two persons, A and B, in business relations with one another. Parliament makes a grant of £500 to A, the tenant, but attaches to the grant the condition that he must obtain the consent of B, the landlord. A, the tenant, goes to B, the landlord, and says, "I want to buy." "You want to buy," replies the landlord; "that is all very well. You cannot buy without my consent, and I am the stronger party." And, undoubtedly, in the case of a tenant desirous to buy, the landlord is the stronger party. The landlord may exact from the tenant, in the shape of a mortgage on the land, or in the shape of additional years' purchase, any addition whatever to the terms, and into that addition he may import as much of this £40 in every £100 as he can force his tenant to agree to. And, further, it may be worth the while of the tenant to agree as long as the landlord leaves him something. Suppose the landlord takes £35 out of the £40—that is a good slice; but he may say to the tenant—"If you agree with me, you get £5 in the £100, and you become your own proprietor in the course of 49 years. If you do not agree you go on paying till the crack of doom." That is the position in which the two parties are placed. As long as you allow these contracts under the name of voluntary engagements, the landlord can screw out of the tenant whatever terms he likes. I do not mean that every landlord would do this, but there are many who would. I am showing what we ought not to permit. We are placing in the hands of the landlord an instrument enabling him to enrich himself, and to obtain an excessive and exorbitant price for his land, in direct contravention of the intentions of Parliament. That is what Ulster is well aware of. Ulster is not deceived. Ulster sees into it. The tenants there are somewhat stronger than they are upon the average in Ireland; their position is a stronger position; but what is the language they hold? The language they hold is that if you want to have a useful Bill it must be not voluntary but compulsory. The tenants must have the right to require that the purchase should take place. That is a very different demand, and it involves a very serious question. I am not going to give an opinion upon that question now. I am pointing out, by an argument which I think irrefragable, that the tenants, for the sake of whom we are going to pledge British credit, will be at the mercy of the landlord. After having made this enormous and unprecedented effort, and placed ourselves in a position of the greatest disadvantage, it is the landlord who will be master of the position. In the division of the spoil the lion's share will fall to him, and nothing but the leavings and the remnants to the tenant. These four objections I am prepared to let stand upon their own merits—first, Irish opposition; secondly, the use of the national credit in opposition to the recorded judgment of the country at the last election—a judgment which, in my opinion, none but the country itself is entitled to reverse; thirdly, the evil of State landlordism, which involves large pecuniary risks, but which involves an evil ten-fold greater than any pecuniary risks in the shock to humanity, to order, and to the relations between countries, which must ensue from the abuse of such a power; and lastly, the sad reverse which we experience when we find that, in the name of a voluntary arrangement, we enable the landlord to bring an irresistible pressure to bear on the tenant, with the view and with the effect of extorting from him, perhaps, nearly the whole, or a very large part, of the immense boon which Parliament proposes to confer. In these circumstances, I resign with great regret the hopes which I entertained of being able to support the Bill. I am not sure that I have even now obtained anything like a full comprehension of the Bill. It is an exceedingly complicated measure. I do not know that a more complicated measure, or one so complicated, has ever been brought before us. It contains points of great ambiguity and points of great difficulty. All these might, perhaps, be encountered judiciously, and, with temper and management, might be got rid of. But the four difficulties I have mentioned, all persons in this House, whatever their political creed, will feel constitute points which ought to be placed clearly in the view of the country, and the country ought to know what it is asked to do, and what Parliament may be about to do. For my part, though I have not the smallest idea of joining in any obstructive opposition to this or any other measure whatever, still I feel it to be my bounden duty to make objection to provisions so dangerous and flagrant in their character, tending, on the one hand, to embark the country in pecuniary risks to which it ought not to be exposed, and on tho other, to make the question of land purchase not an aid in the settlement of the general question of Ireland, but the means of importing into it new social and pecuniary difficulties, and further and further plunging us into the deepest political embarrassment.

*(5.55.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Spuare): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the House has had the great advantage now of having had placed before it the main objections which can be urged against this measure, in the first place by the hon. Member for Cork, who led the Opposition on this occasion, and in the next place by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who has just sat down; and I hope we may conclude that in those two speeches from the respective leaders of the two different wings of the Opposition we have the whole of the arguments of those opposed to this measure. I hope that is the case, though I will not say I am confident, because, if I remember the speech made last night by the Member for Newcastle, there were points in that speech diametrically opposed to the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I propose to go through the various points raised by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian *seriatim*. I am bound to say that he has placed them before us with such clearness that it will be extremely easy—I will not at this moment say to answer them,—but, at all events, to follow them. But first let me point to the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, in his speech last night, that the effect of the Bill would be destroyed—and other hon. Members have also said so, both outside and inside the House—by the fact that under this Bill rents would be so lowered that there would be an agitation on the part of those tenants who did not purchase for the sake of getting those excellent terms which are given by this Bill. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian holds no such view. He holds the opposite, as I understand. He holds that this Bill would have the effect of placing the tenants who buy in a position which would practically be a neutralisation of all the advantages we hope from it.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I said many landlords had the opportunity of securing the benefit for themselves.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I do not wish to push the argument of the right hon. Gentleman one iota beyond his legitimate contention. We have not to deal with "the many landlords," but with the general argument of the right hon. Gentleman. That general argument was: "Who will gain by the Bill? It will be the landlords." That is to say, the landlords would use their powers to such an extent that the tenants would not get the advantages which we expect them to get. But if they do not get the advantages, then the argument of the right hon. Member for Newcastle entirely breaks down—that one person will be placed in such a position of advantage that his neighbour will feel dissatisfaction, and that agitation in Ireland will be thereby increased. The right hon. Gentleman, in the opening of his speech, spoke of the plan of the hon. Member for Cork. I should like, before I sit down, to be allowed to say a few words with respect to that plan. I had hoped that the Member for Mid Lothian would have bestowed some more time upon an examination of the plan "chivalrously" proposed by the hon. Member for Cork, but I am not sure that it was "chivalrously" treated by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. On the whole, I think that there is no person in the House who will deny that the speech to which we have just listened was a heavier indictment against the Bill than the speech of the hon. Member for Cork. The right hon. Gentleman says that this Bill is opposed by five-sixths of the Members from Ireland. I wonder whether in the remaining sixth we are to include the hon. Member for Cork. As my right hon. Friend the Attorney General for Ireland has said, the speech of the hon. Member for Cork was not a speech really against the Second Reading of the Bill. It was a speech which might as well have been delivered in Committee, and which I may suggest before I sit down may still possibly be expanded in Committee. There was nothing in the speech of the hon. Member for Cork which was thoroughly opposed to the plan of the Government. There is another point on which I hope we may say that we are all in agreement, and that is as regards the expatriation of Irish landlords. The hon. Member for Cork does not desire it; the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian does not desire it; and certainly the Bill of Her Majesty's Government is not constructed in such a manner as to lead to it. Look what has happened under the Ashbourne Act. Under the Ashbourne Act, large transactions have taken place. There are many landlords who have sold under the Ashbourne Act who will still continue in Ireland, and will continue to exercise, to the advantage of the country, the duties of a landlord to their neighbours. Then the right hon. Gentleman went through a certain number of objections, which he said would be objections to be taken in Committee. I hope that I may be allowed to follow the example of the right hon. Gentleman, and pass these points over with great rapidity. The right hon. Gentleman said it could be proved that the provisions which the Government had made were given for the sake of the tenants themselves, but that they were not given for the nation at large. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that we had neglected Ireland as a whole. and that Ireland would reap no advantage from this Bill. We believe that the settlement of the Land Question, to which we believe this Bill will contribute in a large degree, is a matter which deeply concerns Ireland generally. It concerns the prosperity of the whole of Ireland. We believe that, in lending British credit to the solution of this question, we are not only doing something for the tenants and the landlords, but something for Ireland, and that we are also doing something for this country. Nay, more. We believe that the establishment of a peasant proprietorship in Ireland is a matter deeply affecting the prosperity of all parts of the kingdom. It strikes me at this moment that the right hon. Gentleman did not refer by a single word to that part of the Bill which deals with the congested districts. That, however, is a large and important part of the Bill. Many of us are agreed that there are provisions in it which may be usefully developed for the happiness of Ireland; and if, on the other hand, there are many points for consideration in Committee; why should not the right hon. Gentleman and his friends go with us into the Lobby in support of the Second Reading at least? If you throw out the Second Reading you throw out the part as regards the congested districts.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): It is absolutely worthless.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: If the hon. Member says it is worthless, I can understand his view, but his leader said that it was inadequate, not that it was worthless.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I said it was illusory.

*MR. GOSCHEN: No doubt according to the hon. Member's recollection the word "illusory" was used in the course of the speech, but my recollection is that it was not used with regard to the congested districts. But, of course, I accept the statement of the hon. Gentleman. We shall have an interesting time when we come to the congested districts, and when we see hon. Members voting against those clauses. I think, however, we shall be able to prove that they are devised for the benefit of Ireland, and if they can be improved and strengthened, though they are said to be illusory, the Government will interpose no difficulty as regards discussion of those improvements. But right hon. Members opposite do not wish, it appears, to attempt to improve this part of the Bill dealing with the congested districts; you are prepared to go into the Lobby to oppose any portion of the plan coming under the consideration of the House. Among the minor points raised by the right hon. Gentleman was the objection to the definition of net value. In making his objection the right hon. Gentleman must have had in his mind his own Bill of 1886. If you had, as the right hon. Gentleman had, a Bill for the compulsory purchase of all the estates in Ireland, then it is extremely necessary [Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE dissented]—yes, there was compulsion. There was no compulsion on the landlords to sell, but compulsion on the State authority to buy. In the Bill of 1886 there was a compulsion to buy every estate in Ireland, with certain exceptions, and there was a compulsory standard at which they should be bought. No doubt, therefore, it was extremely important then to have a standard so far as the proceeds that might go into the pocket of the landlord were concerned; but where you have a voluntary arrangement, as I admit we have in this Bill—and I am prepared to defend the fact—we have to deal, not with establishing a compulsory standard, but simply with the definition. A definition of one sort or another you must have, and we consider this to be the best definition that can be given. It is for the purpose of determining the 80 per cent. which the tenant would pay. Those, I think, are the main points on which the right hon. Gentleman spoke as matters to be considered in Committee. Then he approached the far wider question, and laid down four propositions, which he summed up at the end of his speech, and which I hope I have correctly grasped. He objected to the Bill because it was not endorsed by the voice of the people of Ireland; he objected to it because he considered that, owing to what passed at the last election, we were precluded from placing any burden on the English taxpayer; he objected to the State becoming a creditor of a large number of tenants in Ireland; and he objected to the terms of purchase suggested in the Bill.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I referred to a voluntary arrangement.

*MR. GOSCHEN: Yes; the right hon. Gentleman said it ought to be a voluntary arrangement, and so it is. The right hon. Gentleman's first argument is that we ought not to proceed with this Bill unless we have the voice of the people with us. He assumes, and considers himself entitled to assume, that opposition in this House really means the opposition of the Irish people at large. But then, if hon. Members from Ireland represent the people of Ireland, and if they truly express the views of a great majority of the tenants that they will not buy under this Bill, that this Bill is unsatisfactory to them, at all events they may be relieved of the anxiety that great advantage will be taken of this Bill if the tenants of Ireland do not desire it. That is one answer. Now, here is another which I offer to the right hon. Gentleman. If I am not mistaken, the continuation of the Ashbourne Act was opposed by the representatives from Ireland. I do not remember whether the first production was.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): It was passed by consent of the Irish Members, and in consultation with them.

*MR. GOSCHEN: And the second against it; but I have not seen that this operated largely on the minds of the Irish tenants. We shall see whether, if we pass this Bill, the Irish tenants will be more satisfied with the action of the Unionist Government who have passed it, or with the protest of the hon. Members below the Gangway who are opposed to it. At all events, we are anxious to give the Irish tenants the chance; and, what is more, we believe that those tenants will accept the chance. We believe that if they accept the terms offered to them the same advantages will flow from them as have already flown from the effects of the Ashbourne Act. An hon. Member says that the Ashbourne Act was passed with more than the consent of the Irish Members. Are they satisfied with the result of that Act? If they are satisfied, then this is an amplified Ashbourne Act, giving all the advantages to the Irish tenant, in many ways, of the Ashbourne Act. I confess I cannot help thinking that this protest on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite is rather a political than an agrarian protest against this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman challenged anyone to reply to the question, whether we should dare in the case of Scotland to offer such a measure as this ["No, no!"] Well, to impose upon Scotland such a measure as this against its will. It requires an enormous effort of the imagination to conceive the condition of Scotland being at the present time, or in any conceivable circumstances, in an analogous position to Ireland. The analogy would be this—that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow, and their Scottish friends, should be going about Scotland trying to persuade the tenants not to pay the rents of Lord Rosebery, and other Scottish landlords. What has been suggested, too, is that the coercion which is said to exist in Ireland tends to prevent that combination by which alone the tenants think they would be able to get satisfactory terms. I confess that we have seen many extraordinary things, but I cannot imagine the right hon. Gentleman preaching in Scotland the same doctrines as are preached in Ireland. But, even if it were so, I should like to know what would be said by the prudent and wise tenants in Scotland if such benefits were to be offered to them today as we are said to be imposing on the Irish tenants. It is my firm belief—may I say in reply to the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman—that if a Bill were offered to the tenants of Scotland by which their rents were reduced by 20 per cent., whatever the whole band of Scottish Members should say in this House, it would be most energetically received. One would think from my right hon. Friend's fourth objection, that this is a Bill which we are imposing on the Irish tenants, or one from which they would not reap a full advantage. I reply that this Bill is not a measure which is imposed on the people of Ireland; it is a measure which we offer them, and one of which I trust they will not be slow to take advantage. At all events, if I have failed to answer satisfactorily the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman, I hope that he will not deny that I have attempted to grapple with his argument. On this point let me say this, that neither the right hon. Gentleman nor the hon. Member for Cork used those arguments which are so much utilised in some wilder quarters. They do not speak of the general repudiation which is to follow the acceptance of these terms. Are we to believe that the Irish tenants, because their Members in this House at present protest against this Bill, when they have, through the operation of the Sinking Fund, through the terms which we have offered, and which they will enjoy, become, to a great extent, owners of their property, are we to believe that, short of any general revolutionary agitation, they will be prepared to sacrifice the benefits which we have conferred? The right hon. Gentleman further holds that we are not entitled to bring this Bill before the House on account of our electoral engagements; he also holds, as to placing the burden on the British taxpayer, that we are not entitled by the declarations we have made in so many quarters to proceed with such proposals. But we have not come down to the House with a Bill pledging the country with the insecurity of Irish Home Rule to £50,000,000 or £100,000,000. Then we should, indeed, be outraging every declaration. No; even if we had fallen far short of these gigantic proportions, and had proposed a much less measure, with some great and appreciable risk to the British people, I admit we should not have been acting according to the declarations we have made. But in this

Bill we have taken such precautions, acknowledged in many quarters, and not disputed by the hon. Member for Cork, that we believe no portion of this burden can ever fall upon the British taxpayer. On one point the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle has contradicted in advance his English leader, and with another argument he has also contradicted his Irish leader, because the hon. Member for Cork did not object for one moment to the character of the security.

Mr. PARNELL: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I certainly pointed out, though not at as great length as the right hon. Member for Newcastle, that these securities would be useless for the protection of the British taxpayer, and that no Government would ever use them for that purpose.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I am sorry to hear the hon. Member for Cork say that, because in another part of his speech he offered it as a security for his own plan. I was not going to attack the plan of the hon. Member for Cork at all, but he said that we were going to take his security away from him. Was his security a good or bad one? If the security is not a good one, why did he say he would offer it as a security for his plan? If he did not believe it to be a good security he was not dealing quite fairly with the House. My own belief is that the hon. Gentleman does think—though, of course, I cannot go against the statement of the hon. Member himself—there is very considerable security indeed in these sums which we have taken. I believe he knows, as we all know, that practically the security is good. I believe that this is the keynote—that the security is good. There are four or five degrees of security. Hon. Members do not challenge the first, second, third, or fourth. They have only set upon the fifth and last security; they only speak of the contingent portion of the guarantee fund; while we maintain that that portion is absolutely unlikely, except in time of revolution, to be ever called into play. We prove that by figures, and the great master of finance, who understands figures himself, has not attacked our security, but has attacked the principle only. Let it be noted that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, while attacking us heavily on the cardinal points of the Bill, has left untouched that network of securities which we have built up, and which we believe will prevent the burden from being ever placed on the British taxpayer. The right hon. Gentleman only made out that there would be a burden on the British taxpayer in one way—that is, that the issue of £30,000,000 of securities might slightly affect British credit and the value of the British Funds. The right hon. Gentleman did not pretend that they would lose any of their capital or interest; but the only burden which he represented would fall on the British taxpayer would be that the advance of £30,000,000 might appreciably affect the British Funds. I say that to declare such a result to be a breach of our pledges is a most exaggerated interpretation of any declarations we have made. I maintain that by this Bill we do not put any burden on the British taxpayer, and that the measure is constructed in order to avoid such contingency. The right hon. Gentleman did not attack the structure of our proposals. I come to the point which I think the right hon. Gentleman will admit in his own judgment is substantially the greatest objection in his view to our plan—that is, that we become the creditors of the Irish tenants. One would have thought that this was a heresy of so deep a dye that any Administration attempting to establish such a State creditorship ought to fall under the condemnation of the public at large. Yet State creditorship has already been established in Ireland and is in force there at the present moment. Unless I am historically incorrect, the author of this State creditorship is in part the right hon. Gentleman himself. I believe that under the Acts of 1869, 1870, and 1881 we stand as State creditors in relation to Irish tenants. I ask hon. Members to recall the strength of the denunciation with which the right hon. Gentleman visits this part of our proposal. I frankly admit that it is not desirable for the State to be the creditor of tenants. Did the right hon. Gentleman himself attempt to deal otherwise with the matter?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman says yes; but I think that the name of the Authority which was to stand in the relation of landlord to tenant in

Ireland under his Bill was the State Authority.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The Irish Authority.

*MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, the Irish Authority, but the Irish State. I am not dealing at the present moment with the point as to whether it is the English or the Irish State. There is a point far beyond that. It is a cardinal objection, and one that ought to be argued apart from any question of nationality, whether the State ought to stand in the relation of a creditor. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman was simply directed against its being the State.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I used over and over again the words "the British Treasury."

*MR. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman wishes to make a buffer between the State and the Treasury. As to my challenge on the point, I hope I may be allowed to carry the argument further. Is there not the same objection to the Irish State Authority being placed in the position of landlord to tenant? ["No."] Then I understand that the Irish Parliament may evict but the English Parliament may not. A battering-ram christened after the hon. Member for Cork may evict, but an English Parliament may not. What I wish to prove is that if you had a State Authority in Ireland it would be open to the same objection as the British. We always find that it is not a question of the poverty of the tenant, but a question of the nationality of the evictor, and whether the eviction is by Irish or Imperial Authority. I think that the right hon. Gentleman's system of gaurantees was infinitely more illusory than ours, and for this reason—the Irish tenants would have been able to put precisely the same pressure upon Members of the Irish Party sitting in an Irish Parliament as it may be thought they could bring to bear upon Irish Members in an English Parliament. If there were famine, or any difficulties of that kind, under Home Rule, precisely the same difficulties would occur as could occur now, only they would occur in the absence of those measures which we have taken in order to minimise danger, in the absence of that system of insurance and reserves by which we are prepared for any contingency that may arise short of a repudiation of rents—a contingency in which we do not believe. Now, I come to the fourth objection of the right hon. Gentleman—to the question of voluntary arrangements. The right hon. Gentleman believes that under our Bill the landlords will be able to exact whatever terms they like. Well, that assumption depends, to a great extent, upon this consideration—Who are the more anxious, the tenants to buy or the landlords to sell? In any bargains which are made it is generally the person who is less anxious who is able to get the better terms. Well, what has been the course while the Ashbourne Act has been in force? The landlords have continually been willing to sell, and the tenants have been less anxious to buy, if we may judge by their action; but I admit that that action has sometimes been controlled by outsiders, who have prevented the landlord and the tenant from coming to terms. I know of cases in which landlords and tenants have been most desirous to come to terms, the conditions being infinitely more advantageous to the tenants than any ever sketched by the right hon. Gentleman, and outsiders have interfered and prevented the tenants from availing themselves of their opportunities. But I want to ask whether this objection as to terms comes with very good grace from the right hon. Gentleman, who proposed in his Bill that landlords should have the option of selling their estates, and that purchase should be compulsory on tenants above the £4 line. The hon. Member for Cork and the right hon. Gentleman are now, no doubt, delighted that the Unionists prevented that Bill from passing; for if it had passed the situation at the present moment would have been this—all the tenants above £4 would have been compelled to buy at 20 years' purchase of rack-rents if the landlords wished to sell. Speaking broadly, if that Bill had passed the Irish tenants would at this moment in a vast number of cases be compulsorily paying rents which have been denounced as 30 per cent. too high by the followers of the hon. Member for Cork. The right hon. Gentleman says that we are offering disadvantageous terms to the tenants, and that the landlords will alone derive benefit from our proposals. Let the tenants of Ireland reflect upon what the

Unionist Party have saved them from by opposing the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. They cannot but be grateful to us. But for the action of the Unionist Party in throwing out the right hon. Gentleman's Bill a vast number of the tenants of Ireland would now be saddled with rents which the hon. Member for Cork and his friends say are 30 per cent. too high; I doubt myself whether it is true that those rents are 30 per cent. too high; but my purpose in drawing attention to these things has been to shake the authority of the right hon. Gentleman opposite in his criticism of the measure now before the House. Let me point out further that under the Ashbourne Act the arrangements between landlord and tenant have been entirely voluntary, and who has had the advantage under that Act? At all events, the average is not more than 18 years' purchase, and generally 18 years' purchase of rents which are lower than those which prevailed in 1886. When the tenants have secured such great advantages under the Ashbourne Act I am unable to understand why the right hon. Gentleman should argue that the landlords will be the only persons who will derive advantage under this measure. The whole recent history of Ireland proves that it is not the landlord who will be able to extract extravagant terms from the tenant under this Bill. Nor is that the view of the landlords themselves. The right hon. Gentleman referred, perhaps in somewhat sarcastic terms, to the action of the landlords declaring that they were charmed with the idea that they will be able to get whatever terms they like from the tenants under the Bill. I believe the landlords hold very different language; and if the right hon. Gentleman studies their view he will find, I think, that the particular objection which he has raised on this point is only a theoretical objection, and that the tenants will reap that full benefit which I believe all of us in this House desire that the Bill should confer upon them. Am I not right in this, that if we could only agree upon the method, we are most of us in favour of extending the number of proprietors of land in Ireland. That is the wish of the Irish Party, I believe, and it is the wish of most of those who sit on this side of the House. Well, then, can we not agree on the broad principle of endeavouring to increase the peasant proprietary of Ireland, not for the sake of the landlord only, or of the tenant only, but in the interest of the social and economic prosperity of Ireland? People omit to give due weight to this consideration, that the position in which Irish land is placed under the Act of 1881 is eminently unsatisfactory, and that dual ownership is ruinous to agriculture. That is a point to which the public ought to direct their attention. This is not only a Bill for the promotion of social order, though we hope that may be one of the results, not only a Bill to assist landlord and tenant, though we hope it may do so, but a Bill for improving the economical conditions of Ireland by the promotion of a more satisfactory system of agriculture—the present system being fatal to the interests of both landlord and tenant. Now, having said so much, before I sit down I have to say a few words respecting the plan of the hon. Member for Cork. It is an ingenious plan, and I am not sure that it is not built on a clause in the Act of 1881. It is a plan which may seem satisfactory to many tenants and landlords; but it does not put an end to dual ownership from that point of view, and it is inferior to our proposal. No doubt it would reduce rents, and to that extent would pacify tenants for the moment; but it would be interesting to know whether Mr. Davitt endorses the plan of the hon. Member. What guarantee should we have that a fresh agitation would not be set on foot in respect of the remnants of rent which would be left payable under the hon. Member's scheme? We do not deny that the application of the plan advocated by the hon. Member for Cork would make the money go further, and that we should be able to satisfy a larger number of tenants; but it would leave the matter unsettled, and cause further agitation. Still, I do not contend that this may not be a proper matter to consider in Committee. We do not consider that the hon. Member for Cork's proposal is hostile or necessarily destructive of our Bill. It would be possible for the two schemes to be tried together. I hope I have met the hon. Member's plan in the same conciliatory tone as regards his proposal as that which characterised a great portion of his speech. I do not exactly know how the Members of his own Party view the hon. Member's proposal, and I regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian did not say to what extent he associates himself with that plan; but if the hon. Member's only ground, or chief ground, for objecting to our Bill is that his proposal is not contained in it, he has no right on that account to vote against the Second Reading of this Bill, or to endeavour to throw out a measure which does so much, or might in Committee be so amended as to do so much, for the benefit of the people of Ireland. Nothing could be more gratifying to us, of course, than that in the solution of the Irish Land Question we should carry with us the good will, not alone of the English Opposition, but of the Irish Opposition too. The hon. Member said, "Let us see if we cannot settle this question together." Well, while the Government prefer and will insist on the adoption of their plan, they do not exclude an experiment with his plan, provided he adopts the attitude that his speech leads us to expect, namely, that such a trial would mitigate a great portion of his objections. I have endeavoured now to answer the four objections of the right hon. Gentleman, and to grapple with the points which he has raised. I must say I thought I should have a more formidable task, and that the right hon. Gentleman would attack many other parts of the Bill with that supreme ability which we all recognise. The country will now see what has been urged against our proposals by the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Cork, and I believe it will be seen that our position is unassailed. In conclusion, I will venture to express the hope that those who may not altogether agree with our proposals will not allow their judgments to be warped by their political opinions, and that when we come to the Committee stage—as we shall come—the will examine the provisions of the Bill with that impartiality which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian promised us.

*(6.48.) Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I must ask the indulgence of the House for making my maiden speech so early in my Parliamentary life, and I would not do so if this question were not one in which my constituents take a great, if not a supreme, interest. I feel bound to express their views at the earliest possible moment. As an Ulster Member, as well as an Irish Member, elected since the introduction of this Bill, I express a view which I believe to be the view of my constituents, when I say that this Bill is condemned by the people of Ireland. I think that our duty in discussing the measure has been considerably increased by the way in which the Bill has been prepared by the Government. This question is one of enormous importance. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has just told us that the question is political as well as agrarian, and I was glad to hear that admission. The settlement of the land question, as we have often said, will not settle the political question; but, at the same time, the agrarian question is of enormous importance. The Government say they are settling the whole agrarian question by this Bill. We object to the terms of the settlement, and deny its finality. It is characteristic of the system presided over by the Chief Secretary that this measure has been prepared without consultation with representatives of either the tenants or the landlords. I should like to know how many people outside Dublin Castle the right hon. Gentleman has taken into his confidence. The right hon. Gentleman appears to have deliberately refrained from consulting any representative persons in Ireland. According to the *Times*, he did not consult the landlords, and I can myself affirm on the best authority that he did not consult either the National League or the Tenants' Defence Association. As far as I can make out, the only people whose views the right hon. Gentleman deigned to listen to in Ireland were a number of Ulster farmers who thought fit to go to Dublin Castle to express their opinions. They went all the way to Dublin to tell the right hon. Gentleman that no Bill would satisfy them that was not a measure of compulsory purchase, so that it appears that, if the right hon. Gentleman did consult anybody in Ireland, he has neglected to take the advice of those few whom he did consult. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman—who has furnished us with many strong arguments for Home Rule already—could furnish us with a stronger one than that, in preparing a measure that may deter-

mine the whole future of our country, he has deliberately refrained from consulting any representative person or body in Ireland. I see in the whole framework of the measure the mark of this neglect of Irish opinion. It is said that there are now two owners of Irish land, the landlord and the tenant. I maintain, however, that there is not merely a dual ownership, but a triple ownership of the landlord, the tenant, and the mortgagee—and the owner to whom the Government propose to give the greatest security is the one who has done, in many ways, the most harm to Ireland, and to whom the Irish people would give the shortest shrift, namely, the mortgagee. Members on the Ministerial side, in supporting this measure, have taken two lines of argument. They say there has been great unanimity in favour of land purchase in Ireland, and also that the Opposition have brought a great varietyof objections against this Bill. Well, I venture to say that no line of argument could be more damning to the framers of the Bill. They have to deal with a matter concerning which, by their own statement, there is something like unanimity of opinion, and yet they manage to frame their Bill so that not one of those on the Opposition side, who are in favour of land purchase, can support their scheme. We are all of opinion in this quarter of the House that the Bill is unsatisfactory, and I would remind the Members of the Government, who are so proud of their ingenuity in framing a Bill against which the greatest recorded number of objections has been brought, that two negatives do not make an affirmative in the Division Lobby, nor will they at the polls. I confess frankly that my own views on this question differ considerably from the views of many English Radicals. I think, with the hon. Member for Cork, that the English taxpayer does owe a debt to the Irish people, and that he may fairly be asked to advance something to settle the Irish land question, in a reasonable way. Land purchase would, as a counsel of perfection, be the best solution of the Irish land question. The Irish Party supported the Government which passed the Ashbourne Act, and only opposed its renewal because of the pressure of coercion and of arrears, and Lord Ashbourne's Act, in those parts of Ireland where there is no pressure of arrears, or of coercion, has worked with tolerable success. If the same could be said of other parts of Ireland, we should be content with an Amendment merely of the Ashbourne Act. But it cannot be said. There are many cases where free bargain is now impossible, and for that reason we should oppose a mere renewal of the Ashbourne Act, even if the right hon. Gentleman proposed nothing more. But this Bill is not merely an amplified Ashbourne Act. Far from it. It differs very materially from the Ashbourne Acts. Whenever the right hon. Gentleman has introduced differences between this Bill and the Ashbourne Acts he has introduced them for ill. Whenever, on the other hand, the Ashbourne Act required amendment, he has left it undone. So the Government have managed to frame a Bill against which more objection seems to be raised than against any within recent memory. I can but put forward a selection of the main objections, and put in the first place the objection which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has put in the last place. The Bill must be condemned, because there is no provision for compulsory sale, without which this question cannot be finally settled. I do not know whether this House has any conception of the interest felt by Ulster tenants, and especially by Presbyterian Ulster tenants, on this point of compulsory sale. So keenly do they feel upon this that they, to the number of a thousand, met the other day to declare that no Bill of this kind could be satisfactory that did not contain the compulsory principle. They met in an Orange Hall, in the County Antrim, and they asked my hon. Friend the Member for the St. Stephen's Green Division to present their Petition to this House. These thousand men have thus protested against the Government proposal. A whole battalion of the army of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh has gone over to the enemy. These men feel deeply on this point, and show a very practical insight as to the political position. They are men, who, as my hon. Friend the Member for Cork has said, are admirably fitted to become peasant owners. They see, under the Government proposal, that the whole security of the county will be pledged without their getting the opportunity of purchase. I say, as they say, that this voluntary system is bad both for the tenant and the landlord. It is, firstly, bad for the tenant. As a fact, we know that free contract under normal circumstances in Ireland is impossible for the tenants. It is not necessary to support this assertion by argument. It is a fact of record. It has been written on the Statute Book since 1881 that free contract between landlord and tenant in Ireland is impossible. But now we are told that, although the tenant could not make a free contract from year to year, he is able to make a free contract for half a century. And the inequality of the tenant's position has now been increased by certain transitory conditions—by the pressure of arrears in many parts of Ireland, and by the operation of a Coercion Act designed and administered for landlords and by landlords. I say further, besides being bad for the tenant, because the tenant cannot bargain on even terms, it is, in the second place, bad for the State for the same reason. After all, whatever security you make upon paper, the only real security for the payment of instalments is the value of the land. If a tenant once falls into arrears you necessarily have to evict, and all your force of police and military will be insufficient to keep peace in Ireland. If, on the other hand, land were bought at a cheap rate there might be some security that you would not generally have to evict. By this voluntary system you decrease the security. But the voluntary system is bad for the State also in another way. You profess that you cannot get rid of the whole of the landlords of Ireland, or make the whole of the tenants peasant proprietors. If you only want to get rid of some landlords, I presume you would dispense with the worst of them, and make the most deserving, most suffering tenants proprietors. But I declare you do neither under this Bill. There are certain places in Ireland, certain plague spots, which any one could point to, where, owing to their sufferings, the tenants have the first claim. I do not refer to the congested districts; there are many places outside these made miserable by bad landlords. Such places you do not touch. And it is a matter that all those who have any knowledge of agriculture well understand that the small tillage farmers have suffered more from the agricultural depression than the grazier, and yet you benefit the grazier more than the tillage farmer by this Bill. The larger tenant can negotiate on better terms with his landlord. Without combination he can bring more pressure to bear than can the smaller tenant. In a Return recently presented to Parliament there are some very interesting figures in reference to sales of land, from the end of 1888 to March 31 in the present year. I find that the Earl of Shannon sold 55 holdings for £45,000. It is an expensive luxury, making peasant proprietors out of these substantial graziers. I find that Lord Listowel sold three holdings in Cork for £3,000, and one in Kerry for £2,500. The Marquess of Waterford sold 114 holdings, in Waterford, for £113,000, the average valuation being £51, or over the limit which the hon. Member for Cork thinks necessary. And, finally, as a sort of plum, I find that Sir George Colthurst sold a holding in County Cork for £5,000. These are hardly specially chosen cases. Altogether in Munster it took £541,000 to create 811 peasant proprietors, at the average valuation of £36. I would not, of course, object if I thought that the Munster tenants held under more substantial valuations than the rest of Ireland, but it is not so; it is the big tenants who have gone in for purchase. The average valuation in Munster is £21, so that we see, side by side, the big holdings purchased, the small holdings left. So, also, they are not the worst landlords you get rid of. The Attorney General for Ireland seemed to think he had demolished that part of the contention of my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell), when he said it was a good thing to get rid of absentee landlords. There are absentees and absentees. The absentee landlord may be the very worst, but he may also be very nearly one of the best. There is a class of absentees who, although they do not live on their estates, spend money there by deputy. The absentee may be a liberal landlord; very often he has property in England, and, acquainted with the principle upon which estates are managed in England, gives to his Irish tenants some of the advantages he is compelled to give to his English tenants. There is a great temptation to this man to sell under the Ashbourne Act, because, as he spends money annually on the improvement of the estate, there is no loss of net income when he sells under the Act. And, no doubt, in the case of the London Companies, who are not the best of landlords, but who spent a great deal on the estates, there is no loss of net income when they sell. But what does it mean? When you effect the sale of the property of the London Companies the interest goes year by year out of the country to an absentee collector, the British Treasury, and I believe there is a net loss to the people of the district from the buying out of the London Companies. But the worst class of absentees remain as a plague for future Governments. You do not find that Lord Clanricarde has sold any of his land. Lord Clanricarde expects a little more than 2¾ per cent. for his money. These are the men who have never done anything for the improvement of their property, who are mere rent collectors, who find it more profitable to hold on. So, as the Government plan works out it is a policy of buying out the best landlords and setting up as owners those tenants who can best get on without assistance; an insensate plan for the State to adopt. I admit the difficulty in the North of Ireland in the way of compulsory purchase. I recognise in the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) the most able and indefatigable opponent of compulsory purchase, and I feel confident that his view has largely guided the Government in refusing compulsory purchase in this measure. I hope the electors of South Tyrone will also take note of the fact. However, although the hon. Member for South Tyrone has prevented the Government from putting in compulsory purchase, he now turns round and says, as if offering a sort of sop to the electors, though the Bill is not compulsory it will work out in compulsion. Well, if he intends to address the House, I hope he will explain in plain English what he means by "working out in compulsion." The only way in which I can understand it can work out in compulsion is this. Where a tenant on one side of the road has bought under

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this Act, and has got a reduction of 30 per cent., then a tenant on the other side goes to his landlord, who refuses to sell, and says, "If you will not give me 30 per cent. reduction I will pay you no rent at all." Is that a programme the law-abiding Member for South Tyrone would recommend the Irish tenants to adopt? Why, this is a No-rent manifesto, on a scale and with a permanence never dreamt of before. The Chief Secretary, by summary process, under the 2nd section of the Coercion Act, should, in the well known form, proceed to the prosecution of the hon. Member for his letter to the *Morning Post.* Does it not open a whole vista of possibilities? What would be the state of the country with a sort of Plan of Campaign in force all over Ireland? Yet some such course is inevitable if tenants are to secure advantages offered under the Bill. As a second objection, I say the proposed mode of pledging our securities is a fallacious and disastrous one. Let there be no mistake in the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer about what Irish Members think on the question. We think that if these securities are pledged without our consent, or the consent of our people, the securities are not worth the paper on which the Bill is printed. I shall not deal at great length with this question, because the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) has dealt with it in a comprehensive manner, which I cannot hope to rival. Though there is a pretended freedom of agreement in the bargains between landlord and tenant, there is no pretence of free contract when you pledge our Irish securities. You might have set up representative Local Authorities, and have given them a veto in regard to any particular loan, or you might have asked the assent of Irish Members to some general scheme applicable to the whole of Ireland, a scheme which, in such a case, would, of course, have to be framed by Irish Members. Neither course have the Government adopted. Let us examine these guarantees. You have the cash portion. But how do you get it? By starving our Irish education. You would not give us the same benefits you gave from the Probate Duty to Scotch education, and in that way you keep the money in your till. But suppose we get our hands into another till. Suppose we make it almost impossible for you to pass, year by year, the Estimate giving the mean pittance to Irish National School teachers? In this way, possibly by degrees, a Minister anxious for the progress of business might be brought, year by year, to make concessions to the advantage of school teachers in Ireland, and others. You have already the £5,000 to improve the breed of horses to be paid out of the Consolidated Fund. Suppose, by our pertinacity, we should establish further claims on the Consolidated Fund, what, then, becomes of the cash portion of your security? As for the contingent portion you can only get it by involving the whole country in anarchy. I do not think that if the Chief Secretary, with his experience of the last few years in stirring up disorder, had deliberately designed a measure to make government impossible he could have succeeded better than he has in this Bill. You do not propose to raise the deficiency by poor rate, but by county cess. It is by a levy, from which the landlords escape, that you are to raise this contingent security; it is the poorer part of the county population who are to subscribe towards making good the default of their richer brethren, who have had the advantage of purchase under the Act. Surely by this time the Chief Secretary knows that it is impossible for him to levy such a rate. Why, it is not a security for peace, it is a provocation to rebellion. But the Irish peasantry, though they have been stricken by successive Governments, have not yet sunk to the level of fellaheen, whose money, derived from taxes, may be disposed of as the Government think fit, by a stroke of the pen. The Irish peasantry, if their consent has not been asked directly to the pledging of their security, will never pay any such unjust demand. Let the Government have fair notice that this mortgage of Irish rates is entered into without the consent of the Irish representatives, and there is no covenant for quiet enjoyment in their mortgage deed. And, now, a word or two as to the security for the tenants' interests. I have looked carefully through the Bill, and I find that though you are going to give duties to the Land Commission for which it is essential that you should have some machinery by which the tenants' improvements should be valued, I find no such machinery provided. The only machinery of the kind is that which I find in Clause 17, which is ambiguous in its terms. I venture to say that a tenant's life-work on his holding require some better security then a mere legal metaphor. Lastly, we shall require further particulars as to the *personnel* of the purchase part of this Irish Land Department, and how it is to be conducted. Who are the new Commissioners to be? Messrs. Lynch and McCarthy have done their work well. It is a curious historical circumstance that the reason these two gentlemen were appointed to administer the Act may be ascribed to the temporary—I will not call it alliance—concurrence in the Division Lobby between the Irish Party and the Tory Party in 1885. Had it not been for this circumstance you would never have appointed to administer the Ashbourne Act two men whose traditions are wholly opposed to the landlord party; and now, when you no longer have need of the Irish vote, you are going to shelve these gentlemen or swamp their influence on the Commission? Something more definite will have to be said as to the administration of this Purchase Act. Lastly, the amount with which you are proposing to effect a settlement of the Irish Land Question is miserably insufficient. It is a large sum of course; it is as large, I daresay, as you have the courage to ask for, but it is miserably insufficient. Of course I know the fund will go on, and that if an Irishman should happen to live for upwards of a century, by that time he may become the owner of his holding; but, in the meantime, all our securities are pledged, and yet the question remains unsettled. The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not want to expel all the landlords, nor is there any hope of their being expelled; they will not all get the chance. In the meantime, all the causes of discontent exist, and will continue to exist, in an increasing degree. By this settlement of the Irish Land Question, as you call it, you will make a real settlement still more pressing. Your £33,000,000 will be taken up, and the position as between the tenants who have bought and the tenants who could not buy will be unbearable. I do not think that hon. Members, who know nothing about Ireland, recognise the jealousy that exists between tenants, and must exist where one would be paying 30 per cent. more rent than the other. I heard of a case lately in which two farmers who had been excellent friends went into the Land Courts, and the one had his rent reduced 3s. more than the other. These two men have since been bound over to keep the peace. Are you prepared to bind over the whole Irish people to keep the peace? These are the feelings that will be excited if your proposals are carried into effect; that is, if the tenants go on paying their full rent, which I do not suppose they will. If you had compulsory purchase you might say to the tenant "Why did you not buy"; but now it is not open to him to buy. We have heard from an hon. Gentleman opposite that there are landlords who will not sell unless the tenant brings three years rent in his pocket, as a sort of tip. Your £33,000,000 will be taken up in a few years, and you will be left with the Land Question in a more difficult form to solve. You will not introduce compulsory purchase in this Bill, because you wish to conceal from the English and Irish people the ridiculous inadequacy of your proposal. Indeed, I think the Bill shows that they are conscious of the inequality. I refer especially to that part of it which deals with the Tenants' Insurance Fund. I do not know whether the House has yet realised what a ridiculous thing the Tenants' Insurance Fund is. The table which has been distributed to the House illustrates this more forcibly than any words of mine can do. I find that if a tenant buys on anything less than 20 years' purchase, he has to pay, for the first five years, the sum which he would have paid if he had bought at 20 years' purchase. What is the result? The greater the risk the smaller the premium. If a tenant buys at 20 years' purchase he will pay absolutely nothing to the Tenants' Insurance Fund. If, on the other hand, he buys at 12 years' purchase, when there will be a very remote chance of his getting into difficulty at all, he pays £160 to the Tenants' Guarantee Fund. The provision as to an Insurance Fund is simply ridiculous. It was not put in as an Insurance Fund at all. It was put in to prevent people seeing at once that the Irish Land Question was still unsettled. It was put in to disguise, for the moment, the inequalities of the scheme. The Government think there will not be much feeling on the point during the first five years. They have shelved the difficulty for five years, not expecting to have themselves much interest in Ireland, one way or the other, five years hence. Five years hence, no doubt, the leader of the House will have retired to a higher sphere; five years hence I expect the Chief Secretary for Ireland will be in philosophic retirement, discussing the question of bi-metallism; five years hence others will have to face the Irish Land Question, the difficulties of which will have been aggravated by this Bill. You are leaving a heritage of trouble to your successors, simply in order that you may go on to English platforms and say, "Look how we have settled the Irish Land Question." This proposal cannot settle the question. £30,000,000 cannot settle it on the basis of purchase. The hon. Member for Cork has forward a moderate and statesmanlike proposal, which I think the Government would do well to consider at a little greater length. The hon. Member for Cork has shown the way to settle the question without the expenditure of more than £30,000,000. If you are ready to give more than £30,000,000, possibly the solution of the question, by means of purchase, may be practicable; provided that your Bill is properly amended. If you are not prepared to give more than £30,000,000, you must take the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork, or leave the question unsettled. It will not do for the Government to accept some trumpery Amendment, and then say, "We have adopted the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork." If they want to take up the scheme of the Member for Cork, they had better save the time of the House by withdrawing their Bill at once, because they cannot have both schemes together. After all, we must tell the Irish tenants, and the Irish landlords, that politics, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle has said, is a question of second best. We would like purchase well enough if the English taxpayer is prepared with £160,000,000 to let us have it. We cannot get the £160,000,000, and must, therefore, look out for some other means of settlement.

Thirty-three millions will not settle the question; it will rather aggravate the difficulty. I wish the Irish landlords would take our advice. They have taken the advice of Gentlemen opposite, and it has not done them much good. If they took our advice, no doubt their incomes would be reduced. They would not be able to come over to London for the season, or to vie with the luxury of the English plutocracy, but they would have enough to enable them to live in Ireland, and to work for Ireland. The Irish people, beyond all other people, have shown themselves generous and grateful when any man has turned from the old bad ways and shown himself ready to serve Ireland truly. I do not believe even yet it is too late for the Irish landlords to turn to a wiser course. Surely it would be better, though on a smaller income, to be respected by the Irish people than to remain for ever political Bourbons, forgetting nothing and learning nothing, or else to come to a sort of sham-chivalrous end by dying with the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) in the Shankhill Road, in Belfast. We offer them a better way. The Member for Cork, with a generosity unparalleled in political history, has put a better way before them. If they refuse his offer, under the misconception that they will have a better time under the Chief Secretary's Bill, I think they will regret it. They will find that it is not merely the landlords who sell who will have their incomes reduced. They will find that the tenants of the landlords who have not sold will not pay rents higher than those of their neighbours. It is customary to jeer at "mere Irish Members," and refuse to take their advice. We are told here, and on the platform, that our opposition to this measure is based on personal self-interest, because we are afraid that Ireland will become peaceful under the benign rule of the Chief Secretary. Perhaps there are a certain number of hon. Members, on both sides of the House, who will recognise it as a fact of some importance that the Irish Members do deliberately say that they will vote for the rejection of this Bill. I can speak for myself, at least, and I believe I can speak for the others, when I say we do so without the slightest sense of self-interest, except so far as the interests of our country are our interests. I ask the House, instead of jeering at "mere Irish Members," as the Chief Secretary is wont to do, to listen for once to what we say, and to believe it is for the sake of peace and for the sake of Ireland, that we ask the House to reject this delusive and dangerous Bill.

(7.40.) MR. W. P. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): The House is always prepared to recognise ability when it is shown by new Members, and I think we are also quite as willing as his Colleagues can be to congratulate the hon. Member who has just sat down on his speech. Something has been said about the electoral engagements entered into by Unionist Members at the last General Election on the subject of land purchase in Ireland. I declared against the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian; but I stated strongly my belief in purchase as the best, if not the only method, of ultimately settling the Irish land question. I, therefore, come to the House pledged to consider any scheme of land purchase which has good features, and which is likely to bear a part in the settlement of this most important question. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton (Sir Geo. Trevelyan) expressed himself in favour of State-supported Land Purchase, though he criticised the Bill, and the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down took a similar course. In my opinion, the Government's proposal is made in the interest of the State, and will be successful, because the interest of the individual is recognised, cared for, and made to harmonise with the interest of the State. The main object of all proposals of this kind is to get rid of that dual ownership which has been found to work badly in the past. The question really is, can this be done unless the State is prepared to advance the entire amount necessary to effect the object, and can the amount be advanced under safe conditions as to security for the loan and ultimate repayment. Partial advance has been tried already, with only partial success. I believe a very large proportion of the arrears referred to by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian arose out of these partial efforts, and not out of the efforts made under the Ashbourne Acts. Those Acts have been singularly satisfactory as regards re-payment, and I venture to say that, when the 1st of May comes round, it will be found that the amount of arrears still to collect from payments which became due prior to the 1st of last November are almost infinitesimal. It is said that the Member for Cork and his Party will be able to use this Bill in their own favour. In so far as what we regard as the illegitimate claims of the hon. Member for Cork and his Party are concerned, I believe the measure will cut away very largely the ground from under their feet, and that, if it passes, we shall find less and less desire to disturb the Legislative Union between the two Countries, and Ireland will be more willing than she has been in the past to remain part and parcel of this Empire. Under the Ashbourne Acts, the landlord and tenant must agree as to the amount before they come before the Court. I think that is a wise and salutary condition, and I am rather sorry it has not been adopted here. I am rather afraid that the provision of the present Bill in this respect may have the effect, if the purchaser is discontented with the award, of making him feel he is paying too much for the bargain he has entered into. The same objection may arise, and has arisen, against judicially fixed rents, but we may be protected against that to some extent. What is it that the tenant actually buys? It is solely the interest of the tenant in the holding, and I think it is perfectly possible, by the acceptance of Amendments in Committee, to make it more clear and more certain that that which is said to have taken place in the past, cannot take place in the future—I mean, that the buyer shall not be required under this Bill to buy the improvements which he himself, or his predecessor in title, has made. The total value of the holding is the united value of the landlord's and the tenant's interest. It is not pretended that any part of the tenant's interest is to be bought; the sole object of the Bill is to transfer the landlord's interest to the tenant; can we provide that that shall be done? It seems to me it would be perfectly possible to throw upon the Land Department which is to be created under the Bill, the duty of assessing what is the landlord's interest and what is the tenant's interest, and that the purchase money should be limited, either to the sum representing the landlord's interest, or to a sum slightly in excess of it. I should say that in no case ought it to exceed 10 per cent. Suppose that the value of the landlord's interest in a holding that is about to change hands, is estimated at £400, and that of the tenant's interest at £200. It is known to many hon. Members that it very frequently happens that the tenant's interest is quite as great, sometimes even greater, than the landlord's. In such a case as I have mentioned the State ought not to advance more than £400. If any latitude is allowed—say 10 per cent.—the amount would be £440. The tenant might be willing to pay £40 more than the real value in order to become the sole owner. How will this work out in practice? The State has the entire holding, valued at £600, as security for the advance, but, in addition to that, it will have 20 per cent. of the purchase money not paid over to the seller. The agreed amount of the purchase money being £440, 20 per cent. would come to £88. On the £400, the sum which we suppose the landlord's interest only to be worth, 20 per cent. would only be £80. The State, therefore, would receive the £80 and the £40. As additional security, I would propose to retain the whole of the £40, in addition to the 20 per cent., and add it to the guaranteed deposit which is referred to in Clause 2 of the first Ashbourne Act. In that case the State would be perfectly safe; indeed, I cannot see how, in the long run, any loss at all will accrue to the State, if the Act is carried out as the Ashbourne Act has been carried out, and especially if the services of the present Land Purchase Courts are retained, as I hope they will be. They have done their duty, not only to the State, but also, I believe, to the country and to the people; and they have not allowed an excessive sum to be paid, even when there was willingness to pay it. They have so acted in the interest of the proposing purchaser. I think the method proposed by the Government, even without the guarantees mentioned in the Bill, will be found to be perfectly efficacious in securing the State from loss, except in a few exceptional cases. There have been about four cases of default under the Ashbourne Act, but, on sale, the estates have more than realised the deficits. I believe a similar state of things will result from the working of this Act. It is said that coercion has been applied in order to make purchasers pay too much. But there is no evidence that coercion has been used in the past to compel tenants to pay too much for their holdings; in fact, two hon. Members from Ireland who denounced the Ashbourne Act in the House, afterwards availed themselves of its provisions for their personal advantage. I believe that both intend honourably to fulfil the engagements into which they have entered, but I can only express the great surprise we all feel that those who have denounced this Act should take advantage of it for their own purposes. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has spoken of the evils of "State landlordism." The expression is a misnomer. The State does not become a landlord. It simply puts itself into the position of the banker advancing money on what he deems to be good security. It may be an objectionable position for the State, but it is not the position of a landlord. The State becomes a mortgagee, and not a landlord. The right hon. Gentleman has also referred to the ability of the landlord to extort from the tenant the benefits which he is to receive under the Bill. But it will be the duty of the House to examine the clauses carefully in Committee, and so to amend them as to protect the tenant and the State from the possibility of this danger, which is not entirely illusory. I have a strong feeling that the Irish people, as a whole, are most desirous of paying their just debts, and if it is possible to arrange the details of the Bill so as to convince those to whom the money is to be advanced that they have entered into an engagement under just terms, there will be absolutely no necessity for putting into effect the guarantees. The real security for the advance proposed is the security contained in the holding on which the advance is made. I hope that the Bill will be passed by a large majority, and that a great deal of the opposition which has been threatened will disappear before the Third Reading.

(8.40.) Lord H. BRUCE (Chippenham): It would appear, according to the statements made in this debate, that there are two Irish Land Purchase Bills, one of them being the Government Bill, and the other the measure propounded by the hon. Member for Cork. I may say at the outset that I have never received any brief from my constituency to support any Land Purchase Bill which will make the British taxpayer security for the money expended. I have always been opposed to the purchasing of the landlord's interest in any country, and I maintain that at the present moment there is no necessity whatever for an Irish Land Purchase Bill. We well know from the authorities that no exceptional state of affairs exists to warrant such a proposal. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) is reported to have made a speech in which he stated that instead of there being 4,000 agrarian crimes in Ireland, as in 1881, there are now only 400, and that instead of 2,500 evictions, as in that year, there were, in 1886, only 800. There were formerly 5,000 cases of boycotting, whereas now there are only 152; therefore, I contend that no case has been made out for the passage of an Irish Land Purchase Bill. Now, Sir, I contend that comparisons between the Land Acts of 1884, 1886, and 1890 are entirely beside the mark. We know that the other Party brought in a Land Bill, in 1886, upon which they were defeated, because wrapped up in that measure was a buying-out proposal, to which the country at that time distinctly objected. Every one of these fresh Land Acts has only taught Pat to become more dishonest. What is the bribe now? Twenty per cent. What in the future, if this Bill should be carried? Why, they will go in for repudiation, because the measure has not received the support of their representatives. But supposing the Bill is passed, and the landlords are got rid of, who are you going to put in the landlords' place? Tenants' capital, furnished by the State, cannot take the place of the private capital of the landlords. I would ask, will it be for the benefit of Ireland that we should get rid of landlords like Lord Londonderry, the Duke of Abercorn, and the Marquess of Waterford, and that Castle Stewart, Baron's Court, and Curraghmore should be closed? We have always denounced absenteeism, and now, by proposing to get rid of the landlords, we are asked to go in for State-aided absenteeism. What, I would ask, have these tenants and would-be landlords in the disaffected districts done that England should go out of her way to put them in possession af the land they occupy? I maintain that the financial machinery of this Bill is totally unworkable, and that you cannot guarantee the repayment of the money to be advanced. If you do, you will have the whole of civilised Europe against you. I say, further, you cannot compare this Bill with Lord Ashbourne's Act, because there were a smaller number of tenants to be dealt with under that Act. Under this Bill you hope to create 180,000 landlords, whereas in the case of Lord Ashbourne's Act you had no more than 20,000 or 30,000. The only good portion of this Bill is that which relates to the congested districts. That, no doubt, is an excellent proposal, but whence do you propose to get the money? You have to go to the Irish Church surplus and apply that money to secular purposes, and yet, as is well known, for you constantly see it advertised in the public papers, there is a fund called the Irish Church Sustentation Fund, in reference to which appeals are made to the benevolent to give to those who have been pillaged by the Act of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. Let me point out what are the opinions of some of the supporters of the Government in regard to this Bill. Sir James Caird, the eminent head of the Agricultural Department, is a well-known authority. What did he say in a book published in 1879—a book which cannot be ignored, because it is generally accepted as one of authority. Sir James Caird says—

> "There is not a single reason in favour of exceptional aid from the Public Treasury for Ireland that is not equally applicable to the rest of the United Kingdom."

The result you may, therefore, expect will be that, having begun with Ireland, you will have to pursue a similar course, first in Wales, next in Scotland, and eventually in England. What does the hon. Gentleman the Member for Barrow-in-Furness (Mr. Caine) say on the matter. Speaking the other day, at a public meeting, he said—

> "These land schemes were far-reaching and never ending, and if they applied them to Ireland they would have to apply them to Great Britain."

The same hon. Gentleman said, in his election address of 1886—

> "I shall, if elected to the next Parliament, give my vigorous opposition to any proposal to buy out Irish landlords with English money."

I can now quite understand why the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth said of that hon. Gentleman, "*Cave canem.*" Again, the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War (Mr. Stanhope), in his election address, denounced the spending of £120,000,000 in land purchase, and the Secretary to the Admiralty said substantially the same thing. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Exeter (Sir S. Northcote) said—

> "I think it most unfortunate that landlord and tenant have not been able to agree as they do in England. I will go a step further and say, I am not convinced that the creation of a peasant proprietary will ultimately have for Ireland the admirable effects Irishmen think it may have."

From any point of view, the truth is that this Bill is a leap in the dark. Unless you can guarantee to Ireland resolute government until the Land Purchase Bill can be completed, the state of Ireland will become worse than it has ever been, because it is unfair to expect that any Government should have to face the odium of collecting Irish rents. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, speaking at a Railway Station at Tring, correctly anticipated what would be the attitude taken by the Irish tenants if this measure were passed against their will, as expressed by their representatives, what will be the result should the right hon. Genleman come into power after the passage of the Bill? Why mob law would be again triumphant. The people of the North of Ireland would not submit to that; the country would be placed in a condition of Civil War, and the Government would be unable to collect their rents. These measures are not messages of peace, and they make the Irish people more unsettled than they were before. They have no wish to get rid of the landlords; they have only a wish to sqeeze them as much as possible. But that is what the Government must not allow them to do. The Special Commission reported that the land question had been made the stepping stone to National independence. What reasons have we to expect that the farmers of Ireland will become more prosperous? Are farmers in this country prosperous? Not a bit of it. It would be very hard to find a prosperous farmer at the present time. But I maintain that, in getting rid of the English Garrison, you are doing Ireland a serious injury. When Irish landlords are wanderers on the face of the earth, they will be able to turn round on their English compatriots, and say :—*Hodie mihi, cras tibi.*

*(8.42.) SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, at a very early period of this debate the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow struck the keynote of what has been the main objection of the Opposition to this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of himself as a British taxpayer, and he stated, in the most doleful and alarming terms, the terrors which are hanging over the British taxpayer in the Bill that is now before the House. Well, Sir, I, too, am a British taxpayer, and I venture to say that I represent as large and as important a Body of British taxpayers as himself, or any other Member of the House. But, further than that, I have, since the right hon. Gentleman made his speech, had an opportunity of addressing a large and crowded meeting of my supporters and friends in the constituency that did me the honour to return me. I informed them of my intention to support this Bill, and I asked them frankly whether that was in accordance with the pledges I made at the time of the Election; and secondly, whether it was in accordance with their wishes. Sir, my questions were met with one universal chorus of approbation. Not a single word was uttered in opposition to my expressed intention. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) laughs at that. Let the hon. Member go into my constituency at North Kensington; let him address a meeting of free and intelligent electors such as those to be found there, and I venture to say he will find a large number of those who assemble to meet him who will tell him that this measure is a wise and proper one, because it benefits Ireland in the first place, and next, by benefitting Ireland, it also benefits England. In my opinion, the benefit is not confined to Ireland. What does this measure propose to do? It will plant upon the soil of Ireland a large class of resident peasant proprietors. Despite the opinion expressed by my noble Friend (Lord Henry Bruce), I maintain that the creation of such a class of peasant proprietors must be of great advantage to Ireland. And with regard to the Sister Island, as far as we here are concerned, we are having established across St. George's Channel a community of peaceful, prosperous farmers, who will be bound to us by the tie of friendship. That is a point which I would commend to hon. Gentlemen. That tie of friendship will be of considerable advantage to the producers in Ireland of agricultural products so largely used in this country; and those Irish producers, in their turn, will be customers for our manufactured goods. The benefits of such a measure as this, I think I am right in saying, will not be confined to Ireland, but will extend to this country. I admit that it is not everyone who approves of a resident peasant proprietary. My noble Friend (Lord H. Bruce) is an exception to the general rule; but I believe he will admit that most of those who have thought on such subjects oppose his view, and do believe that the creation of such a class will benefit Ireland. My noble Friend says the necessity for such a measure has passed away, because, forsooth, Ireland is now more peaceful and prosperous than it was three or four years ago. Well, Sir, I gladly admit that Ireland is more prosperous, more contented and peaceful than it was three or four years ago; but, instead of drawing the conclusion of my noble Friend, I say that now is our opportunity to clinch the matter, and, when the nation is prosperous, to put its prosperity on a permanent footing, by removing those causes of discontent, which have in the past so largely contributed to the misfortunes of Ireland. My noble Friend quoted the authority of Sir James Caird for saying that no reasons or circumstances exist for applying such a measure to Ireland that would not apply to England, or Scotland, or Wales. Surely, the circumstances of those portions of the United Kingdom are altogether different from the circumstances of Ireland. I think the circumstances of the various portions of the United Kingdom will be more like each other when Ireland has obtained such at

measure as this, because then I believe that the prosperity of that part of the Kingdom will more nearly approximate to the prosperity that rules here. But I confess that I do not draw from the words of Sir James Caird anything like the conclusion that has been drawn by the Member for the Chippenham Division of Wiltshire. When I say that I cordially approve of the aims and objects of this Bill, I wish to say also that I altogether assent to the methods which the Government propose in order to achieve those objects and aims. In the first place, I think that the methods laid down in this Bill are in accordance with the teaching of economic science, and compatible with what I trust will always commend them to a British House of Commons—or, for that matter, an Irish Parliament as well—I mean honesty and morality. That is a point which I hope hon. Members opposite and hon. Members on this side of the House will not overlook. What is suggested as an alternative to State-supported land purchase? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir G. Trevelyan) spoke of the London Companies, amongst others, as absentee landlords, and appeared to approve of the adoption of means for getting rid of such landlords. I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman in the censure he passed on the London Companies in respect of their management of their estates in Ireland. I am personally acquainted with some of the details of that management, and I know that there are few better-managed estates even in England. But what did the right hon. Gentleman suggest with regard to the expropriation of the City Companies? He said—

> "Yet, how do you improve matters if you allow these Companies to go away with this money in their pockets?"

Well, I am really at a loss to imagine on what other terms we can ask them to go away at all. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that the City Companies—who, I maintain, have managed their estates well, and who, it is admitted on all hands, have spent large sums of money on the improvement of their property, much as landlords in England are in the habit of doing—are to go away without the money in their pockets? I put it to the honesty and right feeling of Gentlemen opposite if this solution of the question is consistent with well-ordered ideas of social and political morality? I say that such a solution is not merely dishonest and impolitic, but is one which would not be listened to for a moment by public opinion in England. The only alternative to State-supported purchase is confiscation, and that, I maintain, is an impossible alternative. It is quite true that the methods employed in this Bill for bringing about State-supported land purchase are backed up in the last resort by the use of the credit of the State. But that is the final and ultimate guarantee only, and it is on account of the use of that final guarantee that purchase can be affected in the economical way proposed. I admit the necessity of looking into the matter—and I have looked into it on behalf of my constituents—to see whether this operation is perfectly safe to the British taxpayer. We must ask ourselves "Is it fairly certain that the British taxpayer will never be called upon to make good any deficiency whatever with regard to this land purchase?" I admit that I was one of those who objected most strongly to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1886, because it not only pledged the taxpayers' credit to an enormous extent—to an extent infinitely greater than the present scheme—but was bound up with the insecurity of an unruly Home Rule Government, hostile to British interests, and hostile, presumably, to the contract with the Imperial Government which it was proposed to set up. The guarantees that are provided by this Bill are of such a character that the taxpayer is absolutely safe from any possibility of ever having to make good any deficiency whatever. What are the guarantees? Just consider the nature of the risks that must be involved in any scheme of State-supported land purchase—risks of a threefold nature. First of all, there is the depreciation that may naturally arise in the value of land; secondly, the loss occasioned by the tenants turning out to be bad and worthless and thriftless characters, or by the inclemency of the seasons, or the bankruptcy of the tenant; and, thirdly, there is the risk of a general strike against the payment of rent on some such plea as was hinted at by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian at a railway station a little while ago, when he talked about the Representatives from Ireland not having assented to the Bill and thereby being absolved—as he appeared to assume—from all moral responsibility in the matter. Now, there are against these risks the securities, first, of the one-fifth of the capitalised value of the land retained or held in abeyance to meet any such thing as depreciation in value, or unthriftiness of the tenant. Secondly, when we consider the probabilities, or even the possibilities, of any such strike as that foreshadowed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, the country will remember that they become less and less every time that each instalment is paid up. It must be remembered how rapidly that will lessen the risk—how quickly it will absolve us from any risk whatever. But behind and after that comes the *ultima ratio* of these guarantees. Suppose all the funds to be drawn on in Ireland to be exhausted. Suppose the county rates have been called on to furnish their aid and to have failed. Suppose that, one after the other, all the many securities devised in this Bill are found insufficient. Then, I say that in the last resort, and if the worst come to the worst, the British taxpayer—or his representative, the British Government—holds in his own hands the funds to meet the difficulty under such extreme circumstances. I believe that those extreme circumstances will never be reached—I cannot conceive it possible that they should be reached—but if, on the extreme supposition that such a situation should be reached, then the British taxpayer would be fully justified, through his representatives in this House, in saying, "Here is a defaulting locality; we cannot give it those grants which it otherwise would receive from Imperial contributions while it is in default—we must apply those funds to make good its default." I admit that that would be a very extreme measure, but I say that it is a measure which would be so powerful in the ultimate resort that there will never be any need to put it in practice; it will be quite enough that such a power is in reserve. Sir, it is because I am anxious that there should be planted on the soil of Ireland such a prosperous and contented resident peasant proprietary as I spoke of just now—it is because I am anxious to see peace and prosperity return to Ireland, and, in the train of that peace and prosperity, happiness and goodwill between the Sister Islands—it is because I wish to see all this done honestly, not by means of confiscation, but by methods compatible with morality, that I shall support the Second Reading of the Bill.

*(9.11.) Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I wish that some responsible Members of the Government had been present during the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Chippenham, who has shown that the Bill will be absolutely unworkable. He reminded us of a number of pledges that had been given by Members on the other side of the House, and told us that we should have mob law, and then civil war. When I heard these things I could not help speculating in my own mind as to what the hon. Member for South Tyrone would think about it. I find myself in absolute agreement with the hon. Member for Chippenham, as to there being no real need for any large scheme of Land Purchase. The result of the Ashbourne Acts has not been encouraging, inasmuch as most of the operations have been in Ulster, where the tenants are already prosperous, and which, therefore, stands least in need of assistance of this kind. I believe there are many estates where there has been no difficulty between landlord and tenant, and in such cases no Land Purchase Bill is wanted. Of course, I am not prepared to say that in no case would I approve the application of State credit to the purchase of land. We have had stated to-night by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian 13 objections. The objections with which I shall trouble the House may be grouped under two heads. In the first place, over a very large part of Ireland there is no real freedom of contract; and, in the second place, the interest of the landlord in the holding which the tenant has to buy is maintained by the policy of the Government at a fictitious value. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, in a speech of his in Oxfordshire about Easter, said that this scheme is based on the voluntary action of the tenants and the landlords. Well, the Bill may provide for nothing but volun-

tary arrangement, and what the voluntary arrangement between landlord and tenant in the Bill is has been pretty well explained by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to-night. But, outside the Bill, I maintain that there is very little voluntary arrangement, unless it be in some portions of the Province of Ulster. At the beginning of 1887 the Government came down and told us that there was no disorder in Ireland except such as arose from the relations between landlords and tenants. Lord Salisbury has said more than once that there has been a land war raging in Ireland. Now, the duty of the Government certainly ought to be in such a struggle to stand impartially between the landlords and tenants. Have they done so? The landlords, headed by the Duke of Abercorn, came last year to the Prime Minister, who used some very significant language to them. He said—

> "I may say, in the first place, that I am very glad to see the results of the Convention of landlords in this deputation; that I congratulate the landlords on the united action that they have taken, and however inconvenient it may in the future prove—I hope it will not—to me as a Member of the Government, on wider and more general grounds, I am glad of the spirit and unanimity which they have shown."

That, coming from the Prime Minister of this country to a deputation, was certainly what, in some other persons, would have been called incitement to a criminal conspiracy. It was a direct approval of the Landlords' Trades Union, and an imitation to go on upon the same lines in the hope of being able soon to reap a harvest. But the Government have not contented themselves with advising the landlords to combine. They have, by their Act of 1887, altered and increased the severity of the Law of Ejectment in Ireland. In 1881 the Bessborough Commission, which consisted of three Irish landlords and one Irish Judge, made use of a very significant sentence in their Report. They said—

> "In many instances, principally in connection with the Law of Ejectment, powers have been conferred upon the landlords in Ireland that have no existence in England."

But this was not enough. By Section 7 of the Land Act of 1887 the Government strengthened the power of the Irish landlords in this respect. They enabled them by a letter in a registered envelope to absolutely determine the right of a tenant to a holding. Now, what use has been made of this power? From the 1st of January, 1888, to the 31st December, 1889, there were no less than 18,816 of these notices given in Ireland. By these notices the tenants were deprived, as far as the Act can do it, of their property in the holding. During the period of 15 months anterior to the 31st of September, 1887, 3,258 tenants, or 21,414 persons were evicted from their holdings. If you take the same proportion between the tenants and their families as is shown by the Returns last before us up to December, 1887, you will find that during the three years of the existence of the present Government more than 130,000 persons in Ireland have been either evicted from their holdings or deprived of their property in those holdings. I have tried to ascertain at what cost this has been done. Returns moved for by the hon. Member for Longford (Mr. Healy) for two years, and by myself for two years, give the cost in each of those years at a figure exceeding £20,000 per annum for constabulary at evictions alone. I have no hesitation in saying that this is much below the mark, and that the total cost of the operations I have mentioned has been not less than £100,000 to the taxpayers during three years of the present Government. The Government, by means I will not characterise, have passed a new law by which they have created, as has been remarked by the Judges of the Irish Bench, new crimes. They have placed the administration of the law in the hands of men whose conduct has often been subject to examination and criticism in this House. I venture to say that the Irish Resident Magistrates have made the word "Magistrate" a bye-word among men. The object of all these proceedings has been to suppress the combination of those who were trying to maintain what they conceive to be their rights of property. Not only have the persons themselves been proceeded against for criminal conspiracy for doing precisely what Lord Salisbury advised the landlords to do, but those who have advised them at their request have been placed in gaol for so doing. As far as the Government could do, they have taken the part of one party in the struggle. The Government are not only responsible for what they have done, but for what they have left undone. The state of business before the Land Commission as regards fixing of judicial rents is, I think, a perfect scandal. The Land Commission is one of the most highly paid Government Departments in the whole British Empire. It costs more than the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office put together. It costs more than the office of the Home Secretary, and more than the Board of Trade. Yet it is unable to overtake the arrears of cases. In December, 1887, the arrears of cases undisposed of numbered 64,852; in December, 1888, they numbered 56,522; and in December, 1889, they amounted to 40,619. Anyone who will go into the figures will find it will take three or four years before the last application for judicial rents is disposed of. What is the position of these unfortunate tenants in the meantime? I believe if you could find out—and I make great complaint against the Government that they are not in a position to supply the information—how many of the persons who have been evicted during the last three years have been unsuccessful in obtaining decisions as to their rents, the number would be very large. I should also like to know how many of the persons on whom notices under Section 7 have been served have made application for judicial rents before receiving such notices. There is hardly any matter in which so much interest is felt in Ireland as the declaration of judicial rents. Again and again hon. Members, even on the Benches opposite, have urged upon the Chief Secretary the necessity of strengthening the Land Commission in order that the tenants have proper opportunities of obtaining the fixing of judicial rents. I accuse the Government of the greatest dereliction of duty on this point. If they desire to paralyse the Land Act of 1881, they cannot adopt more effectual means than to allow these poor people to be harassed on the one hand with eviction notices, and on the other hand to render them unable to obtain decisions as to judicial rents. On the 6th of August, 1888, an hon. Member (Mr. M'Cartan) referred to the case of a tenant of Lord Londonderry, named Hugh Fergusson in County Down. Fergusson had a writ of summons sent to him for the recovery of the old rent. He had applied to the Land Commission to have a fair rent fixed, but he could not get a decision. When the case came before Baron Palles, that learned Judge made certain observations, and the result was a compromise pending the fixing of the judicial rent. It was admitted by the Chief Secretary or the Attorney General that there were many cases in County Down and the adjoining counties in which the tenants had been unable to get any decision, in consequence, I suppose, of the inadequacy of the staff. On the 4th of July, 1889, the case of Charles Murray, a tenant of the Marquess of Londonderry, was brought before the House. He had entered his case in the Court, but had received a notice under Section 7 by which he was precluded from proceeding with his application. I do not think it was, to put it mildly, a very creditable proceeding on the part of Her Majesty's Viceroy, and when one becomes aware of a circular that was issued from Lord Londonderry's rent office with respect to the purchase of land, one cannot help seeing the connection there is between all the cases of serving eviction notices or notices under Section 7 of the Land Act and Land Purchase. On the 20th of February, 1888, Lord Londonderry's agent sent out this circular:—

> "I am desired by the Marquess of Londonderry to inform you that he is willing to offer you your farm at 20 years' purchase of the present rent. Lord Londonderry has decided to take this step (though much against his inclination) mainly owing to the fact that in the event of another bad season he will be quite unable to give the reduction which he has granted the last two years, and by giving which he has received absolutely nothing from his own property; as you will see by enclosed circular you will, by purchasing your holding, still gain a reduction of 20 per cent., which will not be dependent on the will of your landlord, but permanent; and at the end of 49 years your holding will be absolutely your own free of all rent."

The Viceroy was not ashamed, on the one hand, to deprive his tenants of the opportunity of getting fair rents fixed, and, on the other hand, of urging them to purchase on the present rent by telling them he could not make any further abatement. That is an illustration of the pressure which has been brought on tenants in Ireland. The

Duke of Abercorn, who has sold property, for which he has or will receive, according to Return 81, Session 1889, no less than £267,000, took an extraordinary step last year. He did what has not been done, I am told, on the Hamilton Estates for many years. Early last year he sued the tenants for the running half gale. The tenants met and passed this resolution:—

> "That pressure of this kind, whatever its intention, is not calculated to promote the purchase of farms by the tenants on the estate at the landlord's price; that the tenants will not be compelled to buy in that way; and that the compulsory sale for which they look is a sale in which the tenants, as well as the landlord, will have their rights considered and reserved."

There was a direct attempt on the part of the Duke of Abercorn, or those who represent him, by serving for the running half gale to force the tenants to purchase on terms they did not consider fair. Mr. McCarthy, one of the Land Commissioners, gave evidence before Lord Cowper's Commission, and he was asked by the President how the landlord exercised pressure. The answer was—

> "By telling the tenant he must either sign a contract for sale or go out. I have seen letters of this class. I have a letter in my possession from an extensive land agent, telling the tenant that the Sheriff could not be put off beyond to-morrow, but that if the tenant handed the Sheriff the contract for purchase duly executed he would not take possession.—Question 2,215: Then the tenant can apply for a judicial lease—can't he? Not if eviction is hanging over his head—he must go out.—Question 2,219: And what was the effect of this letter of the extensive agent? The tenant agreed to sign the contract.—Question 2,221: And this was a case in which the tenant had become completely at the mercy of the landlord owing to the large arrears of rent? Owing to her owing large arrears of rent."

That is an admission by one of the Land Commissioners as to what was being done before the Coercion Act was passed, by which, as I have pointed out, it has been attempted to deprive the tenants of the right of combination. It is said that the Land Commissioners protect the tenants; but it is not the function of the Land Commissioners; all they are required to do is to see that the holding is proper security for the advance made. It is said there is freedom of contract, but I have no hesitation in saying that freedom of contract in Ireland with respect to the purchase of land is absolutely migratory.

Mr. J. E. Ellis

Now I come to the second objection which I have to the Bill, namely, that the interest of the landlord in the holding has not found its true level of value. Land in Ireland has been at a fictitious value for generations. It gave great political power in times gone by to those who held it. To those who were able to hold land, land was an object of the greatest desire, and on the part of the tenant there has been that land hunger which has been described by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian in his great speech in 1881, so that you had thousands of persons rushing to get hold of land at an artificial price. Not only has the value of the landlord's property been artificially raised, but it has been artificially maintained, and the greatest efforts have been made to prevent the interest of the landlord finding its true level. I see by the Returns, 81 of Session 1889, and 115 of Session 1890, that 12,197 holdings of the value of £274,358 and a rental of £300,370 have changed hands. I invite attention to the relation between the rental and the valuation. There is no question whatever as to the fact that in the valuation of Irish land everything is included. on this point the evidence of Mr. J. B. Greene, the Superintendent of General Valuation in Ireland, given before a Committee of the House in 1869 is extremely interesting. He admitted that in making deductions from the valuation he never took into account the existence of tenant right in the North of Ireland, but merely made deductions on account of ordinary rates. Both Mr. J. B. Greene and Sir Richard Griffiths, who also gave evidence before the Committee, agreed that the valuation was made on the principle of what the property will fairly let at, the tenants improvements and everything else being calculated and included. It, therefore, came to this, that a rental of £300,000 has been exacted for property which commands a letting value of £274,000. That is to say, £10 has been exacted as rent for what everything included was lettable at £9. Tenants must have been paying on their own improvements. This has a very significant bearing on the capital value. The Chief Secretary replying to the hon. Member for Scarborough (Mr. Rowntree) the other day said he did not see what connection sliding scale of rent had with land purchase. But, as will be seen, 17 years' purchase in Ireland is a very different thing to 17 years' purchase in this country. You must in most cases double it, according to the dictum of the Irish Attorney General, that the property of the tenant is equal to that of the landlord. I hold that the landlord's interest in the holding which it is the object of the Bill to sell is still too high. It appears to me that the first thing to do in Ireland before any land purchase scheme is proposed is to make a re-valuation, in order that we may discover what is the value of the tenants' interest, and what is the value of the landlord's interest. Nowadays one does not attach great value to the utterances of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain); but with what he said as to the necessity of a re-valuation on the 13th of October, 1887, at Coleraine, I heartily agree. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "The question, therefore, is how to establish a fair valuation for the transfer that we all agree ought to be made. I do not believe you can lay down a number of years' purchase of judicial rent, whether it be 20 or any other number, which would be fair for all circumstances and all cases, or which could be universally adopted; and I should think that the first condition of any settlement of this business would be that there should be a new and independent valuation for the purpsoes of purchase . . . . Well, then, I say that this separate valuation for the purpose of purchase alone is the foundation upon which any transfer of the ownership of land can take place."

I must say, speaking as I do with some practical experience, I am alarmed at the measure of Her Majesty's Government. It is not only the risk to the English Exchequer which alarms me; but, looking at the question from the Irish point of view, I am afraid that the scheme of the Government will burden the land in Ireland beyond its capacity to bear. We must bear in mind that the rental of Ireland, for the last generation at all events, has not been paid off the soil of Ireland, but largely by the contributions from the relatives of those who cultivate the soil, and who have emigrated to happier countries. When this measure is passed you will not have the relatives of the people abroad sending money home to help to pay the interest on the instalments to the Treasury. If any such scheme as this is carried, the land will be waterlogged. Speaking as a practical agriculturist in a small way, I fear that the land will not be able to produce annually the charges necessary to meet this fictitious system of valuation maintained by the Government, leaving at the same time a fair remuneration to the tenants tilling the land. Looking to all the chances and changes, therefore, that may occur during the 49 years, I think that the security is not a good one, and that the investment for British credit is a dangerous one. I am not altogether adverse to the pledging of British credit in the matter of land purchase; but there are at least five conditions which would have to be satisfied before I could consent to it. The scheme would have to be reduced to true proportions, as suggested by the hon. Member for Cork. There must be a re-valuation; the two parties must be perfectly free, the assent of Ireland must be obtained, and the scheme must form part of a general political settlement. It is because none of these conditions are fulfilled, and because I believe the present is a most dangerous proposal, that I have not the slightest hesitation in recording my vote against the Second Reading.

*(9.56.) Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): The hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) the other evening pointed out that those hon. Members who had not the honour of a seat in the Parliaments which sat between 1880 and 1886 possess some advantage in discussing this question. In supporting this Bill the Unionists are held to be violating the policy they were pledged to in the Election of 1886, and this statement has been repeated this evening by no less an authority than the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. Hon. Members sitting below the Gangway are held to be committed by the constitution of the Land League, and the right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Front Opposition Bench are held to be committed to the policy they enunciated in 1886. I did not sit either in the Parliament of 1880 or 1885. Anything I have said in public on this question has been in favour of, and not against, land purchase, in favour of establishing a peasant proprietorship, and not against it. I come, therefore, to this question with no em-

barrassing past at all events. No one will be able to rake up any old statements of mine and to hurl them at my head. In the Debate of Monday night two noteworthy speeches were delivered, one by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and one by the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien). The last-named hon. Member had a very admirable scheme for settling this question. He was in favour of the policy of the hon. Member for Cork; but before that was put into operation he would establish prairie value. Now, I think that is an admirable way of settling the land question first of all to establish prairie value by working out the Healy clause by friends of the tenants, for that is what is stipulated for, and after that prairie value is established then comes in the hon. Member for Cork with his plan for fining down rents. I take the plan of the hon. Member for Cork as practically amounting to this—it was not very clear, I am bound to say, I hope I apprehended him clearly, but it is not my fault if I did not, for I believe very few could follow the speech at this point with clearness. What he said practically amounted to this. The Chief Secretary said the hon. Member will require £160,000,000 before he can complete his scheme, while I propose to do it for one-sixth of that sum. But his scheme is not a land purchase scheme at all. If hon. Members below the Gangway are committed to anything on this earth they are committed to a scheme of peasant proprietorship. That was the scheme laid down and enshrined in the very constitution of the Land League. They supported the Bill of 1885, which proposed a great experiment in that direction, and on the Second Reading the hon. Member for Cork said that it was a measure which would probably lead to a larger one in the future. If hon. Members are committed to anything in this world it is to a scheme for setting up an occupying ownership in Ireland. Well, but the principle or plan now promulgated from these Benches for fining down rents is not a scheme of that kind at all. The scheme came upon many in this House with surprise, but it is far from being new. Certainly the hon. Member for Cork cannot take out a patent for it. I hold in my hand a pamphlet, reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review* of 1884, containing a scheme for fining down rents in Ireland one-half. The author is Dr. Traill of Trinity College, and it has since been advocated by Mr. J. Wilson, of County Longford. Whatever the scheme is, therefore, it is not new. The scheme does not get rid of the necessity of pledging British credit, and it leaves the landlord still the landlord. The hon. Member's scheme does not get rid of the landlord, who we have been told are entitled to nothing on earth but a single ticket to Holyhead, and it leaves the Irish people to pay what they have been taught to believe an immoral tax. Whatever may be the merits of the hon. Member's plan it cannot be substituted for land purchase, though it may be advisable to adopt it as a supplement or adjunct to the Land Purchase Bill. Where there are landlords who are not willing to sell outright—and there are such—or where the tenant might not be willing to take the risks of ownership, then the scheme might come in, and it might in certain cases economise the public credit and money. What is the real case for the Government Bill? We have been labouring hard at this problem since 1870—where has our success been most marked, and where has the result been best worth garnering? We have protected the tenants' interest in the soil, and still there is dissatisfaction, whether justifiable or not I do not pause to inquire. The fact remains that after 20 years' effort to protect the tenants' interest there is still dissatisfaction. We have tried hard to fix and determine what is a fair rent, but we have had only indifferent results as regards that problem. The only thing that has been a complete success has been the transfer of the land from the owner to the occupier. During those 20 years we have performed that operation in 20,000 cases, and what has been the result? Payments have been punctually made and arrears have been nominal. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian complained that there has been 2 per cent. of arrears, or that that amount has been written off. Surely any mercantile establishment which conducted such a large operation with a loss of only 2 per cent. would be thought exceedingly fortunate. In addition to payments having been punctually made and arrears being merely nominal, peace and order has reigned on the estates where transfers have taken place. All this has been achieved under circumstances of great difficulty. We have had all kinds of political and agricultural weather; we have had "No rent" manifestoes, plans of campaign, and all kinds of incitement to wrongdoing, but wherever they have taken effect it was not upon the estates where transfers have taken place. I repeat that this is the only experiment that has been completely successful during the century in Irish legislation. If we wish to settle the agrarian problem, how are we to do it? We have experimented for 20 years, and the results are written large and luminously on the history of these years. The only question, in my opinion, is how far Parliament ought to go and on what lines Parliament should proceed. I submit that those are the real questions the House ought to discuss. The first line of cleavage arises on the question of ways and means. I would direct the attention of the House to this fact, that the opponents of the Bill are at issue among themselves. The hon. Member for Cork thinks that British credit ought to be pledged, while the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow thinks that the work ought to be done by means of Irish credit alone. As I presume right hon. Members on the Front Opposition Bench agree with the latter, I would ask them who set up the English system of land tenure in Ireland first of all, and who planted the ancestors of the present race of landlords in Ireland? It was England, and England is primarily responsible for the system—the evil system I think it—of land tenure in Ireland, and England cannot escape from the responsibility of the situation, which she has brought on her own head. This Bill does in that respect all that could be done under the circumstances. It no doubt pledges British credit, but it secures that credit by Irish resources alone. During the Debate this point has been systematically misrepresented, and it has been actually travestied by the hon. Member for East Edinburgh. The Bill begins by doing that which the hon. Member for East Edinburgh neglected to point out, by exacting hostages from both buyer and seller. Will any one stand up and say that the securities obtained from the buyer and the seller are illusory? Why they are absolutely cash in hand, and what better security can there be than that? Next, and in addition to the landlords' deposit and the tenants' insurance fund, the Bill creates a guarantee fund. This, it should be remembered, is a new fund of money Ireland has never had before, the Probate Duty only excepted. The duties derived from licences and from Ireland's share of the Probate Duty and the county percentage fund form together practically a new fund brought into operation for this purpose. I will say nothing about the contingent guarantee fund or the compulsory levy, both efficient and real securities, but both very unlikely to be called upon. How is repudiation to work? In the first place, I maintain that purchase under this Bill is not forced upon a single tenant in Ireland. It may, and I think it will, be found to work out to compulsion, so far as the landlord is concerned; very likely he will be compelled to sell, but the tenant is left by the Bill absolutely free. I wish to know why, if a tenant paid a judicial rent 33 per cent. higher than he would pay under this purchase scheme, he should repudiate his bargain? Why should we think that Irish tenants would do anything of that kind? Irish tenants are not fools; but that tenant would be a fool if he could get a reduction of 33 per cent. from his rent and the fee-simple of his land in 49 years to run any risk of repudiation. Can any one say where repudiation is to begin? The operation and working of the Bill must of necessity be gradual. We cannot wave a magician's wand over Ireland and effect this change in a week or a year or two. I believe it will take from 10 to 12 years at the very least to exhaust the money under this Bill, no matter how hard the Departments may work. I know enough of lawyers to know that they will immediately set themselves to devise means of obstructing the Bill, and the chances are that they will succeed. Is it supposed that repudiation will take place at the end of five years? Then the whole credit will not have been pledged, and the risk will be proportionately less. The operations, in fact, could be stopped. Is repudiation to take place in 10 or 12 years? Why, by that time those who have bought in the first years of the operation of the Bill will have secured such an interest that repudiation in their case would be absolute insanity. Does any hon. Member believe that Ulster tenants would repudiate after having put their signatures to a bargain? They would work the nails off their fingers first. This theory of repudiation is a mere bogey. Let us remember that even in the worst times the celebrated "No-rent manifesto" utterly failed. In my opinion, the securities provided in the Bill are amply sufficient without the contingent fund and the compulsory rate, and these will remain in the Bill more for ornament than for use. What are the chief objections against the Bill? The most common is that it is a Landlords' Relief Bill. In connection with this contention the names of some seven or eight noblemen and gentlemen have been mentioned, who, it is said, have taken advantage of previous land legislation, and walked off out of Ireland with millions of the British taxpayers' money. The statement, however, is false, not one of these persons having left. In fact, they reside in Ireland much more than the hon. Member for the City of Cork does. The opponents of the measure call it a Landlords' Relief Bill, because it does not prohibit the sale of large estates. Did the right hon. Member for Bridgeton, in 1884, confine the operation of his Bill to small estates and small landowners? No; that Bill was as open to the large landowner as to the small. I think there are points in the Bill before the House which may operate very hardly against the landlord. As an illustration I will take a holding in Cork or Kerry, the annual rent of which is £4, the rates being 6s. in the £1. Under the Ashbourne Act the landlord would sell on the gross rent, getting the amount of that rent for 12 or 15 years. Taking that he received as purchase money the rental of £4 for 15 years, he would get £60. But under the present Bill the gross rent disappears, and the net annual value takes its place, or the gross rent *minus* the landlord's share of the taxes. As a result, in the case which I have taken the purchase money which the landlord would receive would be £2 16s. for 15 years instead of £4. We may rest assured that the tenants will only agree to give the same number of years' purchase as they have hitherto been in the habit of offering, and, therefore, they will not consent to increase the 15 years. Instead of being a Landlord's Relief Bill, the measure will hit the landlord severely, and it will have to be made easier in more respects than one. The next objection raised turns on the point of local control. I admit that if Ireland were in a natural state the objection would be valid, but we have to treat Ireland as it is, and not as it ought to be. Under the various Acts passed since 1870 some 20,000 occupiers have been transmuted into owners, and all this has been done without the intervention of the buffer of local control between the State and the purchaser. It is true that the defeated Bill of 1886 provided a buffer between the State and the purchaser; but it was precisely to that buffer—an Irish Parliament—that the Unionist Party and the country objected. In 1886 the Unionist Party never opposed land purchase on its merits. What they said was, "This is a proposal to advance £50,000,000 to Irish landlords, and probably £50,000,000 more will be required. We shall not advance this money in the circumstances, because by another Bill you are going to create what would practically be a foreign and possibly a hostile country." I repeat, that if Ireland were in a normal state the case for local control would be complete and could not be opposed. But Ireland is not in a natural, normal state, and I object to the introduction of an element of danger that might retard land purchase instead of advancing it. As long as British credit is used, Great Britain has an absolute moral right to keep its hand on the machinery and to work the machine itself. We are asked, "What are you going to do. You talk of abolishing landlordism. You are going to do nothing of the kind. You are going to set up a new race of landlords, who probably will not be an improvement upon the old." The right hon. Member for Bridgeton has asserted that the people who purchase will not, in many cases, remain in possession, and that the land will be sub-let and sub-divided; but the Attorney General for Ireland has shown that it could not be sub-let and sub-divided. For my own part, I do not think that the temptation to sub-divide and sub-let is so great as it once was, because there is not now the over-pressure of population that existed formerly, and certainly, at the end of 49 years, we may safely prophesy it will have disappeared altogether. But there is a point of substance in this connection that requires the attention of the Government. I do not understand why a man should be allowed to buy on such favourable terms, and 12 months afterwards sell at a fancy price; and, therefore, I suggest that the Land Department ought, in the interests of the State itself—because if a fancy price is given the repayments were thereby imperilled—to have a veto on the sale. We are told by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Trevelyan) that the Bill is not general, and that it is not compulsory. Now, when did the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House become converts to the doctrine of compulsory sale? I know that they went a certain length in this respect in 1886; but certainly this is the first time the doctrine of compulsory sale and purchase of land in Ireland has been openly advocated in this House. Suppose that under this Bill 100,000 freeholders are created. The balance of 500,000 tenants are left out in the cold. There is no more money, and therefore they cannot buy, and, in addition to all the money being exhausted the landlords are unwilling to sell. That is taking the worst aspect of the case. But, at all events, there would be 100,000 freeholders created by means of the credit of the State, and these men are not one bit more virtuous or more deserving of the boon than the others who are unable to get it. That is exactly why I contend the Bill must ultimately work to compulsion. This Bill, however, or any other Bill of the kind, must work gradually, and, that being so, the friction will not be so great. And it is precisely here that the "fining down" process could come into the plan. It is not a new scheme, and it is in this difficulty that the process of "fining down" could be used with advantage. A good deal is being said in Ireland about the tenants' insurance fund, and it is one of the things in the Bill which constitute the greatest difficulty. The objection to it is this—that right in the front of the Bill you lessen the inducement to the tenant to purchase. I recognise that objection, but I feel bound to add that I think the principle a sound one. Whether the landlord "walks off" or not, as the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division phrased it, the State demands that he shall leave behind him one-fifth of the purchase money as security. If we ask the landlord to do this, why should not the tenant bear a share in working out his own emancipation? Again, bad seasons will come, as they have come so often before, and that is another reason why this Insurance Fund should be created. The State cannot be treated as the landlord has been treated; the tenant cannot be allowed to accumulate arrears with the State; and the only way to secure that the demand will be met is to make the good seasons pay for the bad ones. The Insurance Fund secures that that shall be done. I would like the Chief Secretary's attention to this point. The Land Department pays interest on the landlord's deposit; why should it not pay interest on the tenant's? The next point I wish to deal with is that as to the congested districts, which the hon. Member for Cork said he forgot, though it is an urgent problem which has been pressing for a very long time indeed. There is nothing easier than to attack any scheme for grappling with the congested districts. The Bill proposes to encourage the fishing and other industries, and though it does not either suggest emigration or migration, it proposes to assist either. It seeks to force neither upon the community, and it proposes, further, to aid in the amalgamation of holdings. Before we condemn these provisions, let me ask who ever tried to do anything before? Undoubtedly, the real risk to British credit will arise in connection with the congested districts; but it is just here that the British taxpayer is held entirely free, though it is just here, too, that the British taxpayer might well be asked to pay a little money. I admit the Constitutional difficulty arising from the hostility of the Irish Members to this Bill; but I am not sure that hon. Members below the Gangway represent Ireland in that hostility. Certain I am they do not represent Ulster. I should be very curious to see Ulster Members explaining to Ulster audiences in the County of Antrim, or the County Down, the new theory enunciated by the Member for Cork as to abandoning the solution of purchase. Nor am I quite sure of the rest of Ireland. I do not forget when we are faced with this Constitutional difficulty that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway walked out of the House when the Division bell rang for the Second Reading of the Land Act of 1881. But the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian forgot that fact when he talked about the assent of Irish Members being necessary to Irish legislation. And who opposed the extension of the Ashbourne Act in 1888? Every Member below the Gangway went into the Lobby against it. And what has happened? The same Irish people whom the hon. Members claim to represent gladly avail themselves of the benefits of this Act. What happened in County Cork? Mr. Davitt advised the tenants who were about to purchase their holdings on an estate in that county not to let the landlord walk off with a quarter of a million of swag; but the tenants declared that they knew their own business better than Mr. Davitt. The tenants in Munster, Leinster, and Connaught have reckoned the hostility of hon. Members as of no account, but have purchased their lands under the Ashbourne Act. There are two policies before the country —the policy of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, whatever that may be. I do not profess to know, and the right hon. Gentleman will not tell; but there is that policy on the one hand, and on the other there is the Unionist policy. The Unionists are playing against hon. Members on this side of the House, and I believe the cause of the Union will win. After all, the great governing, ruling passion in the heart of the Irish peasant is to own a bit of land; and I maintain that that peasant hardly cares whether there is a Parliament at all, or where it sits, except in so far as it helps him to gain possession of that bit of land. The Irish peasant will go through fire and water, suffering and misery, to get it, and he will buy land on the terms provided in the Bill—terms such as no State ever offered to its citizens before. I believe the principle of this Bill will go far towards the pacification, the security, and the contentment of Ireland. The right hon. Member for Bridgeton, in concluding his speech on Monday, ventured to look ahead 20 or 30 years, and saw a strange vision—bad seasons, farmers ruined, instalments repudiated, Ireland thrown into confusion, and the British taxpayer compelled to bear a heavy burden. I hold that to be a jaundiced view. Prophesy at best is unprofitable; but looking forward and trying to scan those distant summers which we may not see I can discern a different picture, and, at all events, my vision of the future is warranted by actual experience in the past. I see agricultural tenants in Ireland transformed into freeholders; I see the friction between landlord and tenant which has cursed Ireland and destroyed her peace gone; I see capital spent on land without fear of confiscation by anyone; I see a race of men emerged from a prolonged struggle with serfdom enfranchised; I see industrial enterprise following in the wake of peace, order, and security; I see a time when the baskets of the people will be full, offering all manner of store, and when there will be no complaining in our streets. Those who are supporting the Second Reading of the Bill are doing a work which future generations of Irishmen—aye, and of Englishmen too—will rise and call us blessed for doing.

(10.55). MR. DILLON: It appears to me to have been a highly injudicious and ill-advised course which the Government have taken in joining in one Bill two questions, each of which is difficult and important enough to warrant its being dealt with in a separate measure. In speaking on this question I intend to deal with the question of the congested districts. Representing as I do perhaps the largest and poorest of those districts, I have become pretty well versed in all the intricacies of that problem. The British Parliament has done nothing to solve that problem. That is the fault of the system which has brought Ireland to a condition of misery and reproach by a long course of unjust laws, neglect, and misgovernment. I hold that the problem of the congested districts is so beset with difficulties that it is well worthy of a separate measure to itself. It is only within the last year or two that the hon. Member for South Tyrone has had his soul wrung with the condition of these people. It was only when the Olphert tenants defended their houses against eviction that the attention of the hon. Member for South Tyrone and the Government was called to that question. The House has listened to a eulogy from the hon. Member for South Tyrone on the nature of the collateral securities offered to the British taxpayer; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer has given the go-by to those securities. The speeches of the hon. Member for South Tyrone and the Chief Secretary made me wonder why it was thought necessary to touch British credit at all. If the credit of the Irish funds is so absolutely secure, why not pay the landlords in unguaranteed Irish land stock? I should like to see the hon. Member for South Tyrone invest his money in that security. I have noticed in the Irish newspapers that at every meeting of the landlords strong resolutions have been passed in favour of their being paid in a stock which should bear its full face value, and that they have exhibited extreme nervousness that that should be done. I can say this for the benefit of the Chancellor of the Exchequer: that in the speech in which the Bill was introduced by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, he said that if any Irish landlord was so foolish as to doubt the value of his guaranteed stock, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be authorised to exchange it for Consols. I venture to prophesy that in that case during the first year this Bill is in operation there will a steady procession of landlords desirous of exchanging their Irish stock for Consols. There are two points in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to which I wish to draw attention. The right hon. Gentleman has made a most remarkable admission, namely, that the Government have taken every precaution against every possible eventuality short of repudiation; and the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that he had noticed that neither the hon. Member for Cork nor the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had alluded to the possibility of repudiation, although it had been alluded to in wilder quarters. What are those wilder quarters? The right hon. Gentleman was, doubtless, referring to the noble Lord the right hon. Member for Paddington, whom once the Tory Party were proud to follow, but who is now regarded by them as a wild and erratic individual. We, who have had many years' experience of him, however, regard him as a politician to be counted with, and not as an irresponsible person. The noble Lord has deliberately put it on record that, in his judgment, repudiation is not only possible, but is exceedingly likely to occur. Yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer admits that no precaution has been taken against that eventuality. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham, in a letter which I have before me, says—

> "If the extent of these transactions gradually increases, and the number of debtors to the State becomes large, nothing would be easier than for the agitators at some favourable time after a bad harvest to bring about a strike against the payment of interest, and against the payment of rent."

Since those words were written, experience has shown the Irish tenant that the Plan of Campaign is a far more effective weapon than a strike. I now come to the provisions of the Bill. I must observe, in the first place, that it has been brought forward as a great measure for conferring immense benefits upon the people of Ireland; but I am entitled to ask Her Majesty's Government where they have found declarations in its favour? Such declarations have not been made by any public meeting in Ireland or by any representative Irish Body, while the Bill is rejected by five sixths of the Irish Representatives in this House. No single Petition in its favour has been presented by any representative Body. A charge has been made against the Irish Representatives that they do not truly represent the views of the Irish people with regard to this measure. In that case Her Majesty's Government have an easy remedy. Let Her Majesty's Government dissolve Parliament on this issue, and then we shall be able to see what the views of the Irish peasantry with regard to this Bill are. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, however, know perfectly well that we do represent the views on the subject of all Irishmen who are not landowners. I leave out, of course, the South-East of Ulster. Let us look for a moment at the organs of the landlords. What do we find? Here is an article in the *Daily Express*, the official organ and mouthpiece of the landlords of Ireland and of the Tory Party in that country, written on Tuesday last. The hon. Member for Cork had observed that this Bill would not settle the Irish land question; and in commenting on these observations, the *Express* says—

> "That is, of course, obvious. As the Bill stands, it can only settle a tenth part of the Irish land question."

That is the opinion of the Irish landlords. Yet probably the mere fact that the hon. Member for Cork expressed such an opinion would make some men quite fanatical about planting in the country a new garrison of peasant proprietors.

> "But it may be urged (says the *Express*) that another sum of £33,000,000 will follow. That is impossible, for all our local funds are hypothecated by the Bill. It is perfectly true that great and opulent landlords can utilise such a measure; but the small and embarrassed landlords cannot, for reasons which are obvious to all of us."

This is a most remarkable expression coming from such a quarter. So perverse, so idiotic, has been the action of the Government, that they have converted even the *Daily Express* into a second edition of *United Ireland*. What has been the history of the Irish land question during the last 10 years? It has been a series of imperfect measures, drawn up without consulting the Irish Representatives, and passed through Committee in this House without regard to their suggestions, and as a consequence of these proceedings there has been an immense waste of money, and the problem is yet unsolved. There is one point to which I should like to call attention, to which all those who have spoken on this question have given the go-by. Hon. Members speak of the possible loss in a failure of repayment of the advances to the tenants; but no one has reminded the House of the enormous loss to the British Exchequer by the continual failure of previous Land Bills to solve the Irish problem. How much money have you spent on the machinery of this Irish problem during the last 10 years? From 1881, when this question was first earnestly taken in hand, to last year £777,992 has been spent in this way. When the hon. Member for South Tyrone reproaches the Irish Members with quitting the House on the Second Reading of the Land Bill of 1881, the hon. Member was very much mistaken if he thought that we were going to accept the reproach. We left the House on that occasion because we believed that that Bill would be a failure as a settlement of the Irish land question; and though we did not wish to vote against it, because it gave some boon to the poor people of Ireland, we would not accept it as a solution. Had our warning been accepted in 1881, I have no hesitation in saying that £500,000 would have been saved to the Treasury of this country. I do not propose to go at any length into the question of the contingent expenses of the delay in settling the question; but I will ask, How about the expense of the police, how about the expense of criminal prosecutions, which have been simply enormous and incalculable in Ireland, to say nothing of the loss to the people of Ireland from the disturbance thus caused? This Bill, in order to be properly dealt with, must be looked at from three different points of view. It must be judged first of all from the point of view of the British taxpayer and public; secondly, from that of the Irish tenants and the Irish nation; and, thirdly, from that of the Irish landlords; and we must remember that what would be commendable and deserving from one of these points of view may be eminently undesirable from another. I dismiss the point of view of the Irish landlords, because I am not here to represent their interests; the Irish landlords are represented in this House—and very ably represented—by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh and the hon. Member for South Tyrone. I congratulate the hon. Member for South Tyrone on having delivered a speech to-night in his true character. He has criticised this Bill as being too friendly to the tenants of Ireland. He pointed out certain objectionable provisions, and——

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: What I contended was that certain provisions would retard sale.

Mr. DILLON: The hon. Member pointed out that in the remote congested districts, where the rates were high, the transaction would inevitably result in the loss of the advance if the tenants would not agree to the landlords' terms. I will not, however, take up the consideration of the Bill from that point of view; but in dismissing it I will say, with regard to the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork, that if it errs at all it errs in the direction of being too moderate from my point of view. I do not hesitate to say to the House that there are points in that proposal which I do not like. I will not go into them, but one is the proposal to draw the line at £50 a year. I have been consistently opposed to that in the past, and I am still opposed to it. Of one important consideration, however, the House may be confident, and that is that in listening to that speech they listened to a statesmanlike and moderate proposal from the one living man who has power to settle the Irish land question. It has been the subject of wide remark that the Irish Members, the followers of the hon. Member for Cork, did not receive that portion of his speech which dealt with that proposal with cheers. That is perfectly true. They have not received it with enthusiasm, because its character is not one which excites enthusiasm among those who are a party of war. The Irish Members listened to those proposals with the deepest interest; without enthusiasm, because they regarded them as some more of the proposals of compromise which, during the course of the Irish land war, have been made over and over again, by the man who will yet be regarded by the landlords of Ireland with feelings of remorse and regret, because they did not close with his offer when it was still in his power to restrain those forces which may make them bitterly sorry for their action. The hon. Member for Cork could settle the Irish land question on the fining down proposal; but in a year it may be impossible, and it is for the Irish landlords to say whether they are acting wisely. Now, with regard to the British taxpayer, is there any real risk incurred by him under this Bill? And is there any reasonable prospect that if he incurs this risk he will get value for his money? It is to be noticed that hon. Members opposite, when touching on this question, indulge in glowing eulogies of the honesty of the Irish tenants. When did they discover this trait? All this is new; we have not heard it before. But if the Irish tenant is so honest and so good a payer, where is the necessity of calling in any British security at all? The securities may be classed under two heads—the cash securities and the contingent. The cash securities amount roughly to £293,000, and the contingent securities to £876,000. I think I shall be able to prove to demonstration that those securities are utterly rotten and illusory, and that three-quarters of the contingent securities at any rate will immediately vanish in smoke. Power is taken under the Bill to withhold from Ireland grants similar to those which have been given to England and Scotland. But what right is there to do that? To withhold such grants will create a new Irish grievance. They will be withheld in the teeth of the Irish Representatives; and, judging from my experience in the past, the Irish Members will drag them out of the Government in the first two or three Sessions. With regard to the contingent securities, it is to be remarked that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not enter into any detailed exposition. In case of combination among the disaffected purchasers, on the non-payment of their instalments certain grants for education and other local purposes are to be suspended, and the Irish people are to be converted into a nation of savages. Are Her Majesty's Government so obtuse and blind as not to see that by such a course as this they would be playing into the hands of the revolutionary party, whose object it always is to promote as much confusion as possible? Power is also taken for the striking of a special rate to make good any deficiency. Any population that would submit to such a rate would deserve to be kept in slavery for ever, for a more atrocious and brutal and insulting proposition was never placed before the country. This rate is to be allocated to the payment, not of any liabilities of the country generally, but of certain individuals who decline to pay their own debts. Would the people pay such a rate if not struck by the local body? And what local body, if really a representative body, would be willing to strike such a rate? The Government itself would have to strike such a rate, and the result would be a state of things bordering on civil war. When the Ashbourne Act of 1888 was under discussion what were the two principles to which the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Chief Secretary, and others, pledged themselves? First, they said that the measure of land purchase to be introduced would be comprehensive and final; and, secondly, that it would impose no risk on the British taxpayer. It will be in the recollection of the House that these pledges were given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): No, certainly not; quote.

MR. DILLON: I am perfectly certain the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave that pledge, and that was what I gathered from the speeches of right hon. Gentlemen delivered at the time. The present measure fulfils neither of these conditions. It is neither comprehensive nor final, and it does impose a risk on the British taxpayer. I am one of those who hold that the idea of righting Ireland's wrongs by force of arms and by insurrectionary movements is now outside the domain of practical politics. But if the English Government are so foolish as to advance £40,000,000 or £50,000,000 in the circumstances I have referred to, and leave on the minds of the people of Ireland a sense of injustice—a feeling that they have been coerced into paying more than is reasonable for the redemption of the land—and, at the same time, continue to refuse them Home Rule, then I believe that in the very first period of acute distress the opportunity will be taken by the extreme party of Irish Nationalists to raise an insurrection in Ireland of a character infinitely more dangerous than any hostile movement that has taken place in the country during the present century. It would be an insurrection of the nature of the tithe war, but ten times aggravated by the nature of the case. An insurrection taking the form of an organised refusal to pay is perfectly possible, and, under the circumstances I have sketched, not at all unlikely. For the Government to pursue a policy of coercion in Ireland, and to refuse the local Legislature which the nation demands, would be to throw the whole body of these debtors of the State into the hands of the Fenian Party, which, when the first distress came, would probably organise their movement with the rapidity of lightning. The forces of England would, of course, be sufficient to suppress a rebellion; but they would not be sufficient to save the British Treasury from enormous loss. There cannot be the slightest doubt that in the event of such an insurrectionary movement breaking out many millions would probably have to be wiped out as lost to the British Exchequer. The Chief Secretary said that he "declined to contemplate" the eventuality of organised repudiation. That may be very convenient for the right hon. Gentleman now, when he wants to oil the passage of his Bill through the House. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), when it was a question of upsetting the Liberal Government in 1886, did not decline to contemplate it. There was not a single speech he delivered on the hustings in which he did not proclaim to the country that it was not only a possible, but even a probable eventuality. Judging, therefore, by the past utterances even of the right hon. Gentleman's friends, there is a very considerable risk of the repudiation of these debts. It has been said that the instalments due to the Government under the Ashbourne Acts have been paid. One element in connection with that matter has, however, been entirely overlooked by all the Members of the House, namely, that we have inculcated on the people of Ireland their moral obligation to pay those instalments. That entirely alters the situation. I have myself, over and over again, addressing great meetings in Ireland, at which I knew there were present tenants who had purchased under the Ashbourne Act, pointed out that if they bought their holdings under that Act, they were morally obliged to pay, and were in a totally different position from what they were in with regard to the landlords. Our organisation has consistently refused to countenance, directly or indirectly, any tenant who refused to pay his instalment. There is, therefore, no analogy whatever between the present condition of things and a condition of things which might prevail if the leaders of the future, whoever they might be, should, from whatever motive or with whatever ground and justification, proclaim to the people that they would be engaged in a justifiable and patriotic course in refusing to pay a single penny to the Government. I would put this question to any practical Member of the House. How would a Government, having made advances to 100,000 tenants in Ireland, propose to face a Plan of Campaign against payment to them, backed up by a universal system of boycotting of farms? You might evict 20,000 or 40,000 tenants, but how would you get fresh tenants? I say that the boycotting that has taken place, under recent movements in Ireland, would be a trifle compared with the boycotting that would arise then. The man who took an evicted farm from the British Government would be obliged to face the accumulated hatred which is now divided between the Irish landgrabber and the Irish informer, and I do not think his life would be a very happy one. I have been accused of using the phrase in Ireland, and so I use it here now. I have only dwelt on this point because I want to put it on record that we Irish Members warned you of what might occur, so that it may lie in the mouth of no one to say the Irish people are dishonourable if they repudiate these debts. I come now to the point of view of the Irish tenant. It is said we are inconsistent because we have supported Irish land purchase and now oppose it. Why, Sir, we are the men who created Irish land purchase. At a time when it was looked upon as a revolutionary and Socialistic thing, we made it the first plank in the programme of the Irish National League to procure such an alteration in the law of Ireland as would enable every tenant to become the owner of his land. And the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) who never made a single sacrifice, and never did a single iota of work, and who never till the day of judgment would have been able to gain one single benefit for the tenants, comes here and lectures us on the question of consistency, and instructs us as to what "the gallant men of Ulster" think about the thing. I wish the gallant men of Ulster had to fight the battle themselves. They gave us very little help when it was a question of suffering and danger and imprisonment, but they are very willing and eager to reap all the benefits of our labours. We created Irish land purchase. We made the landlords of Ireland anxious to sell, and until we did so we could never get a hearing in this House for the Irish tenants. Talk of Irish land purchase, why the most eloquent voice, perhaps, that England ever heard, after that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, that of the late John Bright, pleaded for land purchase years ago, amidst the howls of the Tories, and the miserable concession he had been able to obtain for the Irish tenants amounted to almost nothing owing to the obstruction of the Irish landlords. I told the people of Ireland, 10 years ago, it was no use arguing the question of purchase in this House until we had reached the House through the Irish landlords, and made them ready to part with their estates. What is it that has made land purchase in Ireland popular? Why, boycotting! Boycotting, and nothing else; and you know it as well as I do. It was not until I, and those who were working with me, were able to say—were able to boast and to prove—that when we banned a farm in Ireland no Irish landlord could let it, that the Tory Party began to discover the virtues of land purchase, and the Irish landlords became so eager for it; and now they turn round upon us and say that we have been the opponents of land purchase in Ireland. For myself, I can say I have been in favour of purchase ever since I entered Irish politics. I am in favour of it to-day, but I am against coercion. I am against the atrocious system which is being worked by the manipulation of the Land Commission; and I am against the Land Commission—which ought to deal out even-handed justice to all, and which, if it showed bias at all, should exhibit it in favour of the weaker man—being turned into a department of landlordism. I am against the handing over of the control of the Commission to Mr. Wrench, the nominee of the worst class of Irish landlords. I am in favour of making the Irish Land Commission, which has been turned into a fraud and a delusion, a fair and impartial tribunal. I am against the infamous and atrocious policy and fraud of introducing, along with the purchase scheme, a scheme of coercion for the real and sole purpose of breaking up the Association of tenants, and denying to us a right which we shall insist upon—that of defining for our people what it is best for them to do. The hon. Member for Central Birmingham (Mr. J. A. Bright)—who, I am afraid, but badly fills his father's place—favoured the House the other night with one of those mawkish, stale old stories that one frequently hears from such quarters, about a poor Irishman on the road side in Ireland, who meets a tourist and tells him, when asked why he did not purchase his holding, that he was willing to purchase, but "them as knows better" told him not to. That language sounded unfamiliar to our ears, and some of us doubted the reality of the story; but supposing it were true, for the sake of argument, where is the shame, where is the wrong, if a poor Irish peasant who has been led by our policy, in spite of your oppression, out of the lowest depths of degradation, told this gentleman that he was prepared to follow our advice? If 10 years' experience shows that it would have been better if the peasantry had followed the advice more slavishly than they have done, who is to blame? They learn from experience. Had they followed our advice in 1881, and not rushed into the Land Courts, they would have had bigger reductions. What did I hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer? He boasted in one sentence of his speech that although we opposed the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act, the Irish tenants paid no heed to our advice, but availed themselves of the measure, and in the next sentence he said that he had noticed that during the past five years the Irish tenantry were getting better terms by being slow to avail themselves of it. I thought I detected a great inconsistency in the right hon Gentleman, though he is very fond of finding inconsistencies in others; because, according to his own statement, the Irish tenants were unwise, and rushed in too quickly to avail themselves of the Act. What has been the nature of our advice, which these gentlemen so much condemn? I claim that we have a right to go to every estate in Ireland and advise the tenants to combine for the purpose of making the best bargains they can, and that the people are well advised when they refer their bargains to us for consideration. What is the nature of the charge made against us in this matter? It is that we have pointed out to the people of Ireland what are the true facts of the case—that, owing to boycotting, owing to combination, and owing to agitation, there is no purchaser of the land of Ireland except the tenant; and that if the tenants only wait and are patient and hang back a little, the price will go down to a fair value. Those who have followed our advice have got their bargains. Those who have not followed our advice are, many of them, sorry men to-day. What argument is it for the right hon. Gentleman to say that certain poor wretched tenants, in their ignorance, and in their eagerness for present benefit in the shape of a year's rent to escape from insolvency, disregard our advice? When they do that they generally repent it. I do not see anything to be ashamed of in giving that advice, and I intend to continue to give it. There are reasons why we supported the Ashbourne Act, and opposed the extension of that Act. We supported the Ashbourne Act because we were in favour of land purchase in Ireland. We oppose the extension of the Ashbourne Act because we are not in favour of swindling the Irish tenants—because in the interval between the passing of the Ashbourne Act and its extension the Commission has been manipulated in the interests of the landlords, and coercion has been adopted for the accommodation of the landlords.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR expressed dissent.

MR. DILLON: Mr. Wrench——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Wrench had nothing to do with it.

MR. DILLON: You need not tell me that. I know better.

Another IRISH MEMBER (to Mr. BALFOUR): What do you know about it?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. DILLON: I will tell the House how Mr. Wrench had to with it. There is not a single man in the Land Office who does not hold his post in terror of Mr. Wrench. They are all holders on short terms, and Mr. Wrench is a gentleman who represents the Government, and who can get anybody sacked—at least, they believe so—at very short notice. Besides, Mr. Wrench is perfectly well known, and, but for the agitation in Ireland, he would have had the control of the whole thing long ago. These are the reasons why I, for one, have adopted the course I have indicated. My position on this question of land purchase has been always perfectly clear. I am in favour of the principle to-day as much as I was when the National Land League was founded, provided it is honestly administered, and provided you have not got coercion in Ireland. It is for the English Members to consider how far they will trust their credit on this proposal. I only speak now of the securities put forward as perfectly preposterous, in order that the people of Ireland may be kept right with the English taxpayer, and that it shall not lie in the mouth of the English taxpayer to say that the Irish are a dishonest nation if they take the money and do not repay it. Speaking on behalf of the large majority—five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland—I say that if you do advance this money to the Irish people under present circumstances, the time may arise—and probably will arise—when, for political purposes as well as for social purposes, we shall call on our people to repudiate the debt. Now I come to the question of the congested districts in the South-West of Ireland. This subject has been a pressing problem in Ireland for 70 years, and the fact of its existence so long without any serious attempt having been made to remedy it is one of the strongest arguments against this proposal of the Government. In order to form a fair judgment of how the problem ought to be dealt with, you must first understand how the congested districts came to exist at all. You have a condition of things existing in the West, in these poor districts of Ireland, as far as I know, absolutely without any parallel in any civilised country in the world. You have in these districts poor land, immensely overcrowded with a population necessarily reduced to a very low condition of living, and in the immediate neighbourhood of these congested districts you have vast extents of rich lands absolutely denuded of population. That forms one of the most striking and characteristic features of this congested district question, to which the hon. Member for South Tyrone and the Government have given the complete go-by. This condition of things has grown up through no fault of the people. Everybody admits that this alone constitutes an enormous claim on the Government and on the country, which, through neglect and through the long, unchecked operation of abominable laws, has allowed these people to fall into a condition of degradation and misery, and to grow up uncared for. How did the congested districts grow up? As far as we can ascertain by studying Irish history, they were mostly territories which were given over a couple of centuries ago to wild animals and to forests. In the course of the civil wars in Ireland terrible barbarities were practised there—barbarities almost without parallel in the history of the conquest of one nation by another. Vast numbers of poor, famished wretches were driven by conquering armies on to the wild land, and were compelled to take to the companionship of wild animals. But this condition of things was trifling compared with what it grew into under English government. The population of these congested districts, as far as I can ascertain, at the end of the last century was very trifling compared with what it is now. What do we find? One of the beautiful characteristics of the Irish land system was that the landlord pursued the poor people on to uncultivated tracts. As soon as they cultivated the land, the landlord put them under rent. A most outrageous proceeding. We find that these landlords, who took possession of these districts, having, under the operation of the English Law, such a power as is described by Arthur Young, in his great work of travels in Ireland, as amounting to absolute slavery, proceeded to increase the population of those districts deliberately. By putting small tenants on the land they were able to extract considerable rents from land which would otherwise have been given up to stubble and grass. I know, as a matter of fact, that in one of the chief congested districts it was the custom of the agent to induce young men to marry by offering them five or six acres of mountain side, which was absolutely valueless for any purpose. A young man was allowed to marry and to settle down without house or home, paid a rent of 1s. a year until he improved the land, and then was put under a rent of, say, 10s. I say that if we have in these congested districts in the West of Ireland, as we have, a festering mass of poverty and misery, and a source of disturbance when starvation comes in, this detestable system is responsible for it, and this country has contracted a heavy debt to those unhappy people whom it has so long neglected. You talk about emigration. What has been the history of those congested districts in the past? The hon. Member for South Tyrone spoke of the large emigration from the West as an improvement in the condition of the people. The people emigrated from land that was well able to support them, and were driven into the poorest and into the most utterly congested districts. I have electoral districts in my own constituency where, according to the Report presented by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, when he was Chief Secretary, in spite of a general depopulation in Ireland the population increased. So you see that emigration has not wrought any remedy. On the contrary, it has been an aggravation of the evil, for those well able to support themselves have been swept out of the country, while the poor have been left behind, because it paid the landlord to evict on the rich fallow land of Galway and Roscommon, and to drive the people on to the poor mountainside, which was perfectly valueless.

It being midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

SUPPLY [17TH MARCH] REPORT.

Order read, for Further Consideration of Postponed Resolution,—

> "That a sum, not exceeding £445,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and abroad, including the cost of Superintendence, Purchase of Sites, Grants in Aid, and other Charges connected therewith, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891."

*(12.2.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I will not detain the House more than a few minutes in giving my reasons for asking the House to disagree with two items in the Vote—the item of £1,000 for increased water supply at Ascension Island, and that of £1,000 put down for a dry room for gunpowder. I am also told that the Government have sent some heavy guns, which can be ill spared from other places, for the fortification of Ascension. Two years ago the noble Lord, the First Lord of the Admiralty, announced to the Committee on Naval estimates that the Government had decided to give up Ascension Island; and I believe I am right in saying that in consequence of that decision it was resolved to spend a considerable sum of money in fortifying the Island of St. Helena. No one in his senses would think of fortifying and occupying both Ascension and St. Helena. Of the two islands, St. Helena is by far the more important and convenient, being about equi-distant between Sierra Leone and the Cape, whereas Ascension Island is 800 miles further north. St. Helena is also the more salubrious and fertile; it has also a civil population which would assist in defending the island. The subject was carefully considered by a Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Carnarvon, in 1881-2, of which Lord Knutsford and Sir Alexander Milne were members, and that Commission came to a conclusion adverse to the fortification of both islands, and in favour of fortifying St. Helena. In the year 1888, the Imperial Defence Act was passed, and it became necessary for the Government to decide whether they

would fortify St. Helena or maintain the establishment at Ascension. A Departmental Committee, called the Colonial Defences Committee, was formed, for the purpose of advising as to expenditure on Colonial Defences, and I ask the noble Lord whether it is not a fact that that Committee reported in favour of the adoption of the recommendation of the Royal Commission, or, in other words, that St. Helena should be fortified, and that the naval depôt at Ascension should be given up? Of this I am confident, that the works which have recently been constructed at St. Helena would not have been constructed if the Departmental Committee had not strongly recommended they should be erected, and if they had not advised that Ascension should be given up. A very considerable sum of money has been spent in the last two years in fortifying St. Helena. Something like £40,000 or £50,000 has been spent in erecting fortifications. I find that in the Estimates for this year there is an indication that Ascension is to be maintained as a naval depôt, notwithstanding the decisions I have mentioned; indeed, money is now being asked for for the purpose of fortifying Ascension. Many years ago, in the days of sailing vessels, when we maintained a large force of brigs and other sailing vessels off the West Coast of Africa, Ascension was, no doubt, of value to the Naval Service. Ascension was then important as a sanatorium, but now, when we maintain only a small force of steamers on the Coast of Africa, it is of very little use. As a coaling station St. Helena is of far more value, and in the event of war it would really be an important place. One word as to the economic part of the question. It is somewhat difficult to ascertain what the real cost of Ascension Island is, but it was stated in the Committee on the Naval Estimates two years ago, that the charge appearing on Votes I. for this island was no less than £31,000. There are 180 officers and men on the island. I do not begrudge the officers their high salaries, for certainly residence at a place like Ascension cannot be very agreeable. But, so far as I can ascertain, these officers have practically nothing to do. The other day the First Lord of the Admiralty, in answer to a question I put to him, told me that the average annual number of sick men sent there from the West African Squadron was only 100, which means an average of only 10 men in hospital; and the stores kept there are valued at under £5,000. I have no doubt I shall be told by the noble Lord that his naval advisers recommend the retention of Ascension; but there are naval officers, and naval officers. I undertake to say that the great weight of naval authority is against the retention of Ascension as a naval station, and in favour of fortifying St. Helena. The two next experienced and able naval officers of the present generation are undoubtedly Sir Alexander Milne and Sir Geoffrey Hornby. They are both strongly in favour of giving up Ascension. I could also quote other naval authority of importance in the same direction, such as Sir George Willes, and the late Sir William Hewitt. I do not propose that we should abandon the sovereignty of the island, but only that it should cease to be used as a naval depôt. No Power could hold Ascension for a month unless it had the command of the sea. St. Helena would be a much more convenient naval depôt, us it could maintain itself in food without external supplies, having a civil population, which Ascension has not. I do not, at this time, ask the House to pronounce wholly against the retention of Ascension, but only to refrain from voting further sums for fortifying the island until the question of retaining the naval depôt there has been further considered by a Committee of this House or by a Royal Commission. I beg to move to reduce the Vote by two sums of £1,000 for increasing the water supply and providing a drying-room for gunpowder on the island.

Amendment proposed, to leave out "£445,800," in order to insert "£443,800,"—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That '£445,800' stand part of the Resolution."

*(12.20.) The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, Sheffield, Eccleshall): The only two items to which the right hon. Gentleman objects can hardly be described as exten

sive expenses on fortification. In opposition to the right hon. Gentleman's contention that Ascension is of no value as a naval station, I assert that no Naval Authority is in favour of the abandonment of that island. It is true that a temporary decision was arrived at to prefer St. Helena, but after more careful and thorough consideration the balance of argument was in favour of the retention of Ascension as a Naval and Coaling Station. It is also a fact that the Committee to which reference has been made preferred St. Helena, but they considered this question from rather a partial point of view. They regarded the value of St. Helena and Ascension from the point of view of the South African trade only, rather than of the increasing trade now coming round the Horn and from the south-east and eastern side of America. The trade with Chili, with the Argentine and the River Plate, as well as with Brazil, is a large increasing trade, and a comparison of the respective distances proves that it can be better defended from Ascension than from St. Helena. As to climatic and other advantages, it is true that St. Helena is a little more desirable and a little less exposed to rollers, but in both islands the climate is good, and in both islands there is sufficient food. The climate has been rendered more salubrious in Ascension by the planting of trees, and there is a considerable increase of food in that island. Besides, Ascension is not subject to the ravages of the white ant, which in St. Helena are so great that it is almost impossible to keep stores or even storehouses there. But it is from a strategic point of view that the advantages of Ascension are predominant. Ascension is more convenient, as I have shown, for protecting our trade from the south-east coast of America, and it is more accessible from the west coast of Africa. In the new plans for re-arranging the naval stations it is proposed to make a separate station of the west coast of Africa, which will not include St. Helena, but of which Ascension will be the head-quarters. As a sanatorium and *point d'appui* for our West Coast Squadron, Ascension is very superior. The right hon. Gentleman seems to attach considerable importance to the fact that St. Helena has a large civil population. The best authorities regard that as a disadvantage for a fortress. The less civil population a naval and coaling station has the better. If the proposal to establish telegraphic communication between Gibraltar and the South East coast of South America is carried out, Ascension will be a point for the landing of a cable, and that I consider a considerable argument in favour of the retention of Ascension. In point of health, defensibility, and accessibility, Ascension is not inferior to St. Helena. As a strategic position, both for coaling purposes and for the defence of British commerce, it is very superior.

*(12.25.) SIR E. REED (Cardiff): I must say that from a Parliamentary and economical point of view the reply just given by the hon. Gentleman is of a most extraordinary character; it is a reply which leaves out of sight the fundamental considerations which ought to be borne in mind in the case. On the ground that St. Helena would be a much better place for all the purposes or for most of the purposes to which reference has been made, a large sum of money has been expended there on fortifications. The alleged ground given by the Representative of the Government was the preferential character, position, and situation of St. Helena. I remember that the First Lord of the Admiralty himself in the Committee upon Navy Estimates, which sat a year or two ago, asked one of his officers, "Is it not intended to abandon Ascension as a station?" The reply was, "So I understand." It was the noble Lord, therefore, who made us presume that we should not be called upon to vote further money to be expended on Ascension; but now my right hon. Friend is met by a statement which, if it means anything at all, means that the large sum of money which has been expended at St. Helena has been wastefully expended. St. Helena was selected as a superior place for a fortified station by comparison with Ascension; but the hon. Gentleman has just now endeavoured to show that

Ascension is the preferable place. No Administration would think of fortifying both places. But it appears now we are to be saddled with the double expenditure. The speech of the Civil Lord entirely ignores the fact that this is an entirely new expenditure, and that £40,000 has already been spent at St. Helena for the same purpose. I think it is trifling with the House to act in this way, and I am quite at a loss to understand how right hon. Gentlemen responsible for the Naval Service can explain their change of view. I should just like to add this, that I am advised that there are other reasons for this expenditure, and that the expenditure on St. Helena has not been a very successful experiment. I have been told that fortifications have been built. I should like to know whether they have been manned yet; whether, in fact, they are, or are likely to be, of any use whatever to the country?

*(12.30.) Sir JOHN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c): There is only one observation I wish to make on this question, and that is, that I think considerable error has been made by mixing up two entirely distinct and separate questions. The strategic value of St. Helena in a general war would be superior to that of Ascension; that is undoubted. I will not detain the House by giving the reasons for that just now. The real point in relation to the question is in connection with Ascension, and is not a strategical point at all. The fact has been referred to that Ascension is nearer to West African ports, where our fleets in peace time are stationed. These ports are unhealthy, therefore our ships have to return at intervals to a more temperate climate. To reduce the Vote by £2,000 would simply have the effect of compelling the ships to steam a longer distance to St. Helena for that healthy climate as a relief from the climate of the West Coast of Africa. It follows that there would be an increase instead of a saving of expenditure. That is to say, ships would have to come from the West Coast of Africa to Saint Helena instead of going to Ascension. Adding the cost of steaming, the cost for coals for an extra thousand miles going and returning, the simple result, then, if hon. Members carry the Division, or inducing the House to adopt their views, would not be economy, but an increase of expenditure.

(12.35). Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I have listened to the remark of the hon. and gallant Member who has just spoken, and they simply amount to this: that St. Helena is a healthy situation, and that Ascension is not quite so much so, so that the unfortunate men belonging to the Royal Marines—of which I believe the hon. Member has been a distinguished and gallant officer—and the naval men would have to go further and fare no better. But when we take into account the remarks offered on the other side in connection with this Vote to what practical result does it lead us? Here we have a right hon. Gentleman occupying a responsible position, expressing his views on the Vote, and he is met with turmoil and noise from hon. Members opposite—noise of such a character that at the risk of being un-Parliamentary I shall not attempt to describe it. We listened to the remarks of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, delivered in his Napoleonic manner, suggested, I suppose, by St. Helena associations—

(12.38.) Mr. Lambert rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question, "That '£445,800' stand part of the Resolution," put accordingly, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

BARRACKS [CONSOLIDATED FUND.]

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [27th February].

"That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That it is expedient to provide for the building and enlarging barracks and camps in the United Kingdom, and in certain Colonies, and for that purpose to authorise the charge upon and the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of a sum or sums not exceeding £4,100,000; to empower the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to borrow moneys for the repayment of part of the sum so issued; and to authorise the payment out of moneys to be provided by Parliament of the principal and interest of such borrowed moneys.'"

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, and Mr. Brodrick.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 234.]

SUCK DRAINAGE [PROVISION OF FUNDS].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a portion of the Costs, Charges, and Expenses (to an amount not exceeding £50,000), which have been or may be incurred by the Drainage Board, for the River Suck Drainage.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

DR. TANNER: I think some explanation is due to us.

MR. JACKSON: The explanation is very simple, and I should have thought the hon. Member was aware of the circumstance. It is proposed to vote £50,000 for the maintenance of drainage works in the area of the Suck River. The district has suffered most severely in the past, and a considerable amount of work has been done at the expense of the landowners, and it has been felt by the Government that the efforts of the landowners might be supplemented by a Parliamentary grant, and this is the usual Resolution upon which a Bill for the purpose will be founded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—(No. 6.)

Order for Committee read.

*MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I hope the Government will allow the House to go into Committee *pro formâ* on this Bill, upon which there is a general concensus of opinion, and its further consideration shall then be deferred until the 18th of June, thus allowing ample time for the preparation by the Government of Amendments, which will be willingly accepted if they do not affect the main principle of the Bill.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I regret that we cannot assent to this proposal. Though the Second Reading was carried, there was a general agreement that the Bill could not be allowed to pass in its present shape. Further time should be allowed for the consideration of Amendments on which all parties may possibly agree.

Committee deferred till Wednesday, 18th June.

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 15.)

Bill considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time this day, at Two of the clock.

House adjourned at five minutes
before One o'clock.

By Contract with H.M.'s Government. An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 25th April, 1890.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BILL.

(No. 56.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*THE EARL OF MEATH: My Lords, the Bill which I am about to ask your Lordships to read a second time to-day might, perhaps, more properly be called a "Bill to Regulate the Custody of Children," inasmuch as the adoption which I propose is a very qualified one. It will be within the recollection of your Lordships that last year I brought into this House a Bill for the adoption of children. That Bill met with somewhat severe criticism at the hands of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, and in deference to his opinion several alterations have been made in the present Bill; the result of which is that that now proposed is, as I have already said, a very qualified one. The object of the Bill is, as your Lordships are aware, to prevent parents or other guardians who have consented to the adoption of their children afterwards resuming possession of them until they have satisfied the Justices in Petty Sessions that it is to the interest and for the benefit of the children that they should be given up. It is a very common occurrence for children who have been adopted with the willing consent of their parents or guardians to be removed from the custody of their foster-parents with the sole object of the disreputable parents deriving pecuniary advantage either from the services of the children or by extracting money from the persons who have adopted them, when it would be to the welfare and best interests of the children for them to remain with those persons, the position of the parents rendering them neither pecuniarily nor morally fit guardians to maintain and educate the children. The object of the measure is to prevent the continuance of this abuse. It is most urgently needed in the interests of the little ones themselves; and I contend that it is idle, and worse than idle, to plead the claims of parentage in cases which are marked, for the most part, by heartless indifference to all parental obligations. As I have stated, this Bill is different to that introduced last Session, inasmuch as it is not proposed that institutions shall have the power of adopting children. That clause has been left out in deference to the remarks which were made by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. It has been most unfortunate for me that a certain well-known institution has, both last year and this year, taken very marked steps in a direction of which, on the whole, I do not approve, because the result has been that my Bill has been, in some measure, mixed up with this particular institution. People have thought that I have brought in this Bill for the purpose of enabling persons to break the law, which is very far from my intention; and it has also been thought that this Bill has behind it some hidden motive in the direction of proselytising. I venture to say there is no Member of your Lordships' House who is more distinctly opposed than myself to taking children away from their parents and bringing them up in a religion contrary to the wishes of those parents. I think it would not only be a very unwise thing, but a very immoral and wrong thing to do; and I desire, here, most emphatically to say that I could never give my support to any measure which I thought would have a proselytising tendency. Happily I have had the opportunity of obtaining the kind advice of the head of the Roman Catholic Church in this country; and I hope that the clause which has been inserted in this Bill at his desire will remove or prevent any fear on the part of Roman Catholics that this Bill is intended for the purpose of bringing their children over to any other faith. There is a proviso in Section 2 which appertains particularly to the subject to which I have just referred. It is that the Justices in Petty Sessions before they can give an order for the adoption of any children must pay proper regard to "the religion of the parents and all other circumstances of the case." The primary object, then, of the present Bill is to empower the Justices to regulate the adoption of children, and to suspend the right of parents to resume possession of them until they have shown the Justices that it is to the interest of the children they should do so. Besides the case of vicious parents, there is the case of parents who are disposed to do all they possibly can for their children, but who have not sufficient means to provide them with even the bare necessaries of life, and whose children suffer consequently in health and well-being; and it is notorious that there are a large number of benevolent persons who are quite willing to take over the care of such children if they could be certain that by doing so they would not expose themselves to annoyance afterwards and get themselves perhaps mixed up with legal difficulties. Last year I gave your Lordships several instances of the way in which the present state of the law operates to the detriment of children. Since then, I have obtained the assistance of two ladies, one of whom, Miss Rye, is very well known by name to your Lordships. She has taken great interest in the emigration and care of children, and she has given me a list of 25 cases—and another lady, Miss Alexander, has given me a similar list—where children who had been handed over to them had been taken away after they had expended years of care and large sums of money upon their education. Now, in all those cases, Miss Rye assures me that the parents of the children were nominally Protestants, and that formal documents had been signed sometimes in open Court handing over the children voluntarily to her care, and yet in those 25 cases, notwithstanding the formal documents thus drawn up, they were taken from her. The parents had evidently withdrawn them with the intention of deriving some pecuniary advantage from the institution or from the lady. In one case the children were placed there and removed some years afterwards by the father, who was a most disreputable character. In another case where the father was dead and the mother had deserted the child, it was years afterwards claimed by her. One most lamentable case was that of a child named Ruth Minnel, who after several years was reclaimed by the mother. In all the cases the parents were more or less disreputable. The particulars are given in the lists handed to me by the ladies I have mentioned, which your Lordships can see for yourselves. Now, it has been said that it is contrary to the principles of English law to legalise adoption. Of course, it is: we know that. But I would ask whether every alteration in the law is not to the extent of that alteration contrary to the principles of English law as then existing; and whether all our reforms have not been contrary to the principles of English law at the time? Our laws, my Lords, are not like the laws of the Medes and Persians, that they cannot be altered. What is the reason that your Lordships sit in this House and that we have two Houses of Parliament if it is not for the purpose of changing these laws of ours if we find that change is necessary? On the other hand, your Lordships are aware that the adoption of children is no novelty in other countries. Some noble Lords on the occasion of the last Bill being brought forward spoke as if the adoption of children was a subject quite unknown to the laws of civilised countries, whereas the exact reverse is the case. I believe I am right in saying that there is hardly any civilised country in the world that has not some law of adoption, and that our own country is peculiar in not possessing such a law. France has very stringent laws with regard to the adoption of children, and so has Germany. All our Colonies have laws with regard to the adoption of children. Since last year I have visited America for the purpose of ascertaining what has been done there in this matter, and I have here some extracts from American State laws on the adoption of children, and I shall be very glad to give a copy of them to any noble Lord who cares to read them. They are extracts from the laws of five States—Ohio, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Massachusetts. In all these States there are laws regulating the adoption of children, and very stringent laws too. In Ohio the President of an Orphan Asylum can sanction adoption without the consent of the surviving parent if the child is abandoned or voluntarily surrendered to the asylum; and if a child is a vagrant or incorrigible he may be placed by the Court in an Orphan Asylum. An adopted child in that State becomes the child and legal heir of the person adopting him. In Connecticut the adopted child can also inherit property the same as a natural child. In Pennsylvania, an institution which has maintained a child for one year may consent to its being adopted even though the parents object. If the parent is a drunkard or a profligate, or if he has deserted the child for two years, it can be adopted by any person who chooses to come forward, with the consent of the Court contrary even to the consent of the parent. Again, in Pennsylvania an adopted child can inherit property from his foster parent. In Illinois if a child is abandoned by his parents they lose all right to the control of it; and one year's desertion in that State is enough for the Court to sanction its adoption by any benevolent person who chooses to come forward. A child is not entitled to inherit property in Illinois unless under certain circumstances. In Massachusetts the period of maintenance is two years instead of one year, as in the other States. If a child is supported for two years in a charitable institution that is sufficient to enable it to be adopted even contrary to the wishes of the parents. Also if the parent is a drunkard, or not in circumstances to properly provide for the child, a civil proceeding handing it over to an institution operates as an adoption of the child by that institution. So that in Massachusetts such a sanction as was given in the case mentioned by Miss Rye would have been sufficient to prevent the child being afterwards taken away. In Massachusetts the child does not lose the right to inherit property from the natural parent. The result is that in three States—Ohio, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania—a child can inherit property from its adopted parent under all circumstances. In Illinois the child can inherit, unless the inheritance is expressly limited to the heirs of the body of the adopted parent; and only in Massachusetts is the inheritance forbidden. My Lords, it may be said that it would have been wiser to have changed the title of this Bill, and that I should have called it instead of a Bill to regulate Adoption, a "Bill to Regulate the Custody of Children." I have thought it better to adhere to the original title; but if it is considered by your Lordships' House that the title does not properly represent the scope of the Bill, I shall be very willing to alter it. A great deal of stress was laid in the last discussion upon this question of parental control, and the noble Lord on the Woolsack said that parental control was one of the cardinal principles of the law. No doubt it is, and very justly so. But why is it one of the cardinal principles of the law? Because parental control is considered to be for the benefit of the child. But if it is once shown that parental control is not for the benefit of the child, then surely we are losing the spirit while adhering to the letter, and giving the control of the child to one who is not fit to be entrusted with that control! It is for the interest of the State that we should give the control of a child to a person who is fitted to bring it up as a good citizen of the country; and it is distinctly contrary to the interests of the State that we should permit a bad parent to exercise a bad moral influence upon his child. Doubtless, the general effect of this Bill will be to ensure the continuance of adoption in the case of children whose parents remain in a position which debars them from properly providing for the children; but it will be seen, on reference to the clauses of the Bill, that the foster-parent has always to run the risk of the child's parents or natural guardians coming forward and showing that circumstances have arisen which would make it beneficial that the children should return to them. It may be argued that the Poor Law Act of last Session has now given power practically for the same thing to be done. But that is not the case, for the Act refers only to guardians; and there is no system at present in existence by which a person may obtain the right of guardianship over a child, even though an orphan, unless the child be first pauperised. A case appeared a short time ago in the newspapers which illustrates this very forcibly. Mr. Drummond, one of the Trustees of the Dock Labourers' Union, made an application to Mr. Mead, the magistrate at the Thames Police Court, for advice respecting the children of Henry Mark Vale, a dock labourer, who had died from starvation, brought about, it transpired, from his having denied himself food for the sake of his children. The children were found in a backyard in a very dirty and neglected state, and they had no one to look after them, their mother being in the Banstead Lunatic Asylum. A question arose as to the religion of the children, and it was stated that the father had been a Roman Catholic, and a Roman Catholic priest gave an assurance that the children would be received into a school. There was a step-daughter, however, and it was considered necessary for the children to be removed first into the workhouse, or in other words to be pauperised. The Dock Labourers' Union had been paying £1 a week for their children's maintenance, and they would rather the children should not be pauperised if it were possible to avoid that course. But Mr. Mead thought the better course would be that the children should be taken to the workhouse, otherwise the Dock Labourers' Union might find themselves involved in all sort of litigation. Consequently, those children, in order to be taken care of, must be sent to the workhouse and made paupers. That I contend is not right. Now, my Lords, Clause 2 of the proposed Bill provides that anyone who is desirous of adopting a child must obtain the sanction of the Justices who are to pay due regard to the religion of the parents and all other circumstances of the case; and they must be satisfied that it will be for the benefit and advancement of the child in making an order for adoption. Clause 3 provides for the cessation, on adoption by the foster parents, of the parent's authority. Clause 4 relates to the attendance of the father and mother and foster parent before the Justices, and of the husband or wife of the foster parent, as the case may be. The object of Clause 5 is to provide that an order for adoption shall not be made until after careful inquiry by the Justices. In the last Bill in the latter part of Sub-section (d) the word "solely" was found to give rise to a good deal of comment, but as its insertion was unnecessary it has been thought better to leave it out in this measure. Clause 6 provides that if the child is 14 or upwards, an order shall not be made without the child's own consent. So that here the Chancery rule is adopted. Clause 7 gives the foster parent, so long as the order continues, all the rights of the father, and he is, on the other hand, to be liable to all the obligations of a father. In Clause 8 a most important change has been made in deference to the Lord Chancellor's criticism. So far as the promoters of the Bill are concerned, they feel strongly that for the purpose of inheritance the adopted child should be deemed to belong to the foster parents; but they have expressly limited the clause, in deference to the views expressed by the Lord Chancellor, so that the adopted child shall not be capable of taking property expressly limited to the bodies of the parents by adoption. In most countries where adoption is allowed, it is usual to make the adopted child, to some extent, heir to the foster parent. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that there are many arguments which may be used in support of the opposite contention. Your Lordships will understand that I am not at all anxious that this clause should be retained if you should think it ought to be omitted. It was put in, as I have said, simply because the Lord Chancellor made a point of it last year. Clause 9 is inserted to make more clear the restriction on the right of the foster parent to take property from the adopted child. Clause 10 is put in to cover cases where the children have no parents. The object of Clauses 11 and 12 are in regard to rescinding the order for adoption, if it be shown to the Justices to be for the benefit of the child, and to protect the former foster parent from future claims for the maintenance and education of the child. Clause 13 is for registration. In nearly all cases where adoption is recognised by law some public register is kept; and it is specially necessary in this case, where application may be made to revoke the Order. Then Clause 14, the last, relates to the fees to be allowed to the Justices' clerk. I think they are the customary fees. Now, my Lords, I hope I have made out a case for the Second Reading of this Bill, and I trust your Lordships will feel I have done everything I possibly could to meet the objections raised by the noble Lord on the Woolsack and other noble Lords in the Debate of last year. In fact, the ship has been lightened as far as that could possibly be done, in order to enable it to contend with and weather any storms it might meet. I trust, therefore, the measure will now make good its passage through this House. Your Lordships must, I am sure, feel that there is a real necessity for some alteration in the law. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me what the form of the alteration may be, so long as I attain my object that the children should be benefitted, and that bad parents should not be placed by law in the position of being able to act detrimentally to the interests of their children. As our population increases and becomes more and more congregated in vast town—centres there can be no doubt, I think, in the minds of most people that there is greater need now to look more carefully after the children than in the past. In villages and small towns people know what is going on, and each person has more or less knowledge of his neighbour. But in large towns we have not that knowledge; and I think, therefore, that the law, so far from putting difficulties in the way of those who are doing all they can to benefit the rising generation, should, as far as it possibly can, assist them and make it easier for workers among the poor to help the little ones, and to avail themselves of opportunities to bring them up as good citizens worthy of the country in which they live. I shall not detain your Lordships any further, but will only add, in expressing the hope that you will permit this Bill to be read a second time and pass into Committee, that if there are any objections made to it they will not be objections to principle, but simply to details which may be altered.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—*(The Earl of Meath.)*

The LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, the noble Lord has referred so repeatedly to my objections to his measure, and to his having, as he says, dealt with and met them, that I feel bound at once to tell him that my objection to the Bill is one of principle and not merely of detail. I think he has somewhat misapprehended the effect of the objections which I made last year, and which to a great extent will have to be repeated on the same lines upon this occasion. I then endeavoured to point out that the very serious and important change in the law contemplated had not been thought out to its natural consequences; that the noble Lord had introduced a Bill which did not settle the law which he proposed so to change at all, but had left a great many things uncovered; and, further, I pointed out how rash and inconsiderate was the change sought to be made. If that objection were met it would dispose of my objections altogether. With regard to the principle of the Bill, I think the measure is founded on a mistaken view. Yet I desire to do every justice to the noble Lord's motives. I am sure he will, on the other hand, not do me the injustice of thinking that in anything I said last year I intended to convey an impression that he was acting from proselytising motives. On the contrary, I think I acknowledged that his motives were worthy of the highest praise, as were the efforts he was devoting to those who, he thought, required protection. To this extent I am prepared to go. I think the law as regards the custody of children is not altogether satisfactory as it stands; and if this Bill could be made into anything like a Bill for the regulation of the custody of children I should have no objection to its Second Reading. But I do not think it can. The Bill is pervaded from first to last with the idea that there can be such a thing according to the law of England as the legal adoption of children and transfer of parental rights and obligations, so that the foster parent when such adoption has taken place is to be the parent for all intents and purposes, and the real parent is to lose all claim to parental control. That is a principle against which I must protest. If I were to adhere to it I should be acting contrary to one of the cardinal principles of the law of England; and I think, unless there is shown some great and important reason why these principles should be changed, we ought to maintain them. I do not deny that there are great evils which require to be met in connection with the custody of children. I know there have been very many cases of poor persons, distant relations or even strangers, who, from kindness and in charity, have taken charge of deserted children, and where years afterwards, the children having been properly maintained and brought up, the parents or persons having the legal claim over them have intervened and taken them away for very unworthy objects, quite adversely to the welfare of the children. That is certainly an evil which ought to be met, I agree; but I do not think it can be met by empowering the Justices at Petty Sessions to make orders for adoption in this way. I think it could be done by a measure empowering the Courts to prevent a parent re-asserting his parental control, where, by his own misconduct, or by the desertion of his children, he has forfeited his right to exercise that parental control. But that is not at all what is done by this Bill. This Bill suggests that there shall be a change in the principle of our law by introducing adoption. Its object is—

> "To prevent parents or guardians who have consented to the adoption of their children afterwards resuming possession of them."

I object to the explanatory note that the reclamation is often made to the injury of the child, and simply for the pecuniary advantage of the parent, because it is stated that the Bill is to operate in cases where parents have agreed to make over their children, and is to render them bound by their agreement The English law does not recognise such a thing as contract to get rid of parental authority and obligations. No such agreement can, by law, be made. I really do not know what effect the curious performance referred to by the noble Lord could have. Is it suggested that the parties should go before a notary, sign a solemn document of some description for this purpose, and then take it before a Magistrate for his sanction? I cannot imagine a Magistrate lending himself to any such performance, and for the reason that it would be an absolutely idle one. There is no such adoption recognised as the noble Lord supposes. If it means that there should be a consideration given to parents which would induce them to get rid of their children and hand them over to somebody else, that seems to me at once to come within the description of my late lamented Friend, Lord FitzGerald, when he said that this was "exactly the thing which would conduce to the traffic in children," which the noble Earl objects to, and I think it would. My Lords, this is not one of those objections which can be affected by altering a clause and bringing in a Bill next year with one clause altered and another got rid of. Then, again, what is it that the Magistrate is to do? It is stated in the Bill that he is to "have regard to the religion of the parents." What does that mean? What discretion is the Magistrate to exercise? Does it mean that he is only to allow the adoption of a child of Protestant parents by a Protestant, or of a Catholic child by a Catholic? But that may not be the only difficulty. Supposing one of the parents is of one religion, and the other of another, what is the Magistrate to do. Which religion is to be preferred? The Bill does not explain itself in that respect, and perhaps the noble Earl will throw some light upon it before the Debate closes. The Magistrate is "to have regard to the religion of the parents." What regard, and what is to be the criterion? This is a very important matter, for it is a question which would very much divide people, and lead to great unpleasantness and inconvenience if such a Bill were passed. This appears to me to be a serious objection in principle to the Bill. I will not detain your Lordships longer in discussing its details. The plea put forward for this alteration in the law might be met, as I have pointed out, by further regulation of the custody of children, which would give to Magistrates the power now exercised by some of the Courts to refuse to allow the assertion of parental authority in cases where that authority has been abused. That, I think, would effect all the noble Earl desires, and this Bill, therefore, is unnecessary. Certainly it is not very well conceived. Next year the noble Earl might again say that he has met all my objections in detail, and I only want to show that that is not a sufficient answer. Even upon the theory on which it is based it is not well designed, and I repeat that my great objection to it is that it introduces into our law a totally new principle, which is not demanded by public feeling, and which, I believe, would be fraught with mischievous consequences to the proper relations between parent and child.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I am sorry I do not find myself in the position of being able to support the noble Earl's Bill. My objection to it is based very much on the grounds which have been mentioned by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. It seems to me, though there exists an acknowledged evil in the present law with regard to the custody of children which ought to be remedied, this is not the proper remedy for it. We know very well that it not unfrequently happens that children are taken possession of by worthless parents many years after they have been adopted, and cared for under circumstances of great hardship to the children themselves. It appears that this proposed legislation is directed to that particular grievance; but I can easily conceive, and I am sure your Lordships can well imagine, that there are various ways in which that evil can be satisfactorily met, as I hope it may be met. But to introduce this plan of legalised adoption, is, I think, quite a mistake. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has pointed out some of the consequences which would follow from this Bill, and I should like for a few moments to point out some of the objections which present themselves to me. In the first place, it is provided in Clause 4, that the parents or guardians, or some one or other of the next of kin of the child, shall appear before the Justices. It does not say "if there are no parents." Now, just observe what may happen. The parents may be abroad, or at some great distance from home—under this clause, one of the next-of-kin might proceed to get the child adopted and taken away from the custody of its parents. Again, I do not think the noble Earl has considered the incidence of the Law of Settlement, for under the Bill as it stands this singular consequence would follow, that a foster grandparent would be obliged to support an adopted grandchild, which, I think, would be very hard. Then, I do not quite understand the meaning of the clause as to the devolution of property, but, if I read it rightly, it provides that the child is to succeed to both the property of its adopted parent and of its real parent. That seems to be a remarkable result. By Clause 8 all the legal consequences and incidents of the natural relation between parents and children are to follow, but the result of that must be considered in connection with the Marriage Law. It is quite obvious that under our Marriage Law, if this clause were to become law, an adopted child could not marry the child of its adopted parent; but I am not at all certain that it might not be able to marry its own sister or brother, as the case might be. Then I would point out this remarkable result under Clause 11. By that clause, any person desiring to vary or rescind the order for adoption may apply to have it rescinded or varied. Now, I will suppose this not at all improbable case. A child is adopted and brought up with the other children of the foster parent, and afterwards in life it may desire to marry one of those children. Is it to be at liberty to apply to have the adoption order rescinded in order that it may marry the child of its adopted parent? There are a variety of other wide results which might happen, and I can hardly imagine any subject which would require more careful and minute consideration of the whole consequences which would follow upon such adoption. Then look at this important point. Unfortunately we have known many cases, although I am quite certain the noble Earl has not the least intention of promoting anything of that kind, where great controversies have arisen of a very unpleasant character with reference to what is termed proselytising. This Bill would not in any way cure that evil, because, under Clause 11, any person may apply to have the order rescinded, and that provision would offer a positive premium for interfering with the bringing up of an adopted child in one religion, because some people might be of opinion that it should be brought up in some other faith. In truth, all kinds of disagreeable consequences would follow. I must apologise for detaining your Lordships by drawing attention to matters of detail which should be rather dealt with in Committee, but I thought it right to point out to the noble Earl some of the chief objections which occur to me. If there can be shown a necessity for embarking upon such novel legislation, be it so; but I contend that there is no such necessity, for we can remedy the existing evil by other and much less objectionable means; and, therefore, although I fully appreciate the motives of the noble Lord, and certainly think it is desirable the matter should be dealt with, I cannot support the Bill as it stands.

The LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount Cranbrook): My Lords, I should like to say a few words on one point which has been referred to, the desertion of children by unprincipled parents, and their falling into the hands of the next-of-kin. Take the case of a grand-daughter. A woman takes the children of her daughter and brings them up, the father never coming near them at all. If he deserts his wife for two years she becomes independent of him and free from his control. I do not see why something of the kind should not be provided for in the case of the children, and I think that, in any case, their possession should not be resumed by the parent unless the expenditure of the foster parent, or next-of-kin, has first been paid. It should not be left so easy a matter for the parent to resume possession of the child, and I think the noble Earl might do well to turn his attention to some of those matters affecting the custody of children without going into so deep and wide-reaching a question as that which is involved in his present Bill.

Lord HERSCHELL: My Lords, I entirely feel the force of the criticisms upon this Bill, which have been made by the noble Lord on the Woolsack, and by my noble Friend the Earl of Kimberley, and I feel quite alive to the difficulties they have pointed out. I am not, however, quite sure that I feel as impressed as the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack with the idea that the adoption of children and freeing parents from their natural obligations and rights is opposed to the cardinal principles of English law. A great many cardinal principles of English law have been found to be most objectionable and indefensible. We have got rid of a great many so-called "cardinal principles," and, therefore, simply to be told that a proposed measure, if it be beneficial, is "against the cardinal principles of the English law" does not weigh with me a feather's weight. If a thing is bad, it is bad of its own inherent nature: and if it is good, it is none the worse for being opposed to a cardinal principle, which is, on account of that opposition, injurious, and ought, therefore, to be got rid of at once. But I quite agree that such an extreme and serious change in the law of England as this ought not to be made without grave consideration and great deliberation, and the very fact that it is a far-reaching change from the principle at present underlying and deeply rooted in our law, is, of course, a very strong argnment why that change should not be made, and a new principle adopted, unless it is clearly proved that it is necessary, expedient, and wise. So far, I am entirely in agreement with my

noble and learned Friend. And further, it may well be a question whether public opinion is yet ripe for such a solution as this Bill presents of the difficulties which have arisen upon this question. It is a very great change to make to free the parent from the liabilities which the law imposes upon him towards his children—to take away from him the obligations imposed upon, and the rights of control given him, and transfer them to some other person. I think it is not unimportant to consider that in some of the States in America, where the laws are founded on our ancient Common Law, this important change has been made, and, experience has shown, with advantage. It seems to me that we are too apt to cling to things that have been, and not ready enough to inquire whether changes which seem necessary have been made elsewhere, and, where they have been made, whether or not experience has shown them, on the whole, to be advantageous. I trust we shall not lose sight of admitted evils in our desire to preserve the existing rights of parents which this Bill, like every other proposal of the kind that I have heard, recognises can only cease to be theirs with their consent. I trust we shall not be led in any such views to disregard or treat lightly the real evils which exist. This Bill has been conceived in the interests of neglected children, and it is designed for their benefit and protection. And, after all, the advantages of parental care and the exercise of parental rights by those who care so little for their children that they are willing to hand them over to somebody else, are presumably not of any great benefit to a child; because, as I understand, it is only where the parents are willing to divest themselves of those rights that this proposal for adoption will operate. My object in addressing the House upon this occasion is not either to meet the arguments which have been adduced against the Bill, or to urge your Lordships to read the Bill a second time, but to say this—that, as there is an admitted grievance in this matter, I trust that evil will be dealt with. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack admits that it exists, and I think it is a pressing evil. We are not troubled in your Lordships' House with any particular excess of legislation, and I am quite sure that we shall have ample opportunity and leisure for doing justice to any legislation that can be proposed. Her Majesty's Government have not favoured this House with any measures for consideration during this Session, and any measures of theirs, which may come before us from the other House, will do so at a comparatively late period. I, therefore, invite my noble and learned Friend, before we have to consider measures from the other House, to favour us with some proposals upon this subject. I am quite sure your Lordships will be most happy to consider them, and will do your best to put them in a shape which would give general satisfaction. In that way the object of the noble Earl might be carried into effect without any unreasonable delay, and without raising the objections which I feel may fairly be adduced to this Bill.

*Lord MORRIS: My Lords, I had not the honour of being a Member of this House when a similar Bill was introduced by the noble Earl; but I confess I was a good deal startled on reading the Bill which he has introduced this Session. Giving him credit, as I am sure everybody who knows him will, for great philanthropy, for entire freedom from any sinister motive of proselytising, and for a simple earnest desire to benefit neglected children, it does amaze me how such a Bill as this could have been introduced. It violates one of the cardinal principles of the Common Law of this country. I confess I do not at all share the readiness of my noble and learned Friend, who spoke immediately before me, with the greatest lightness of heart of getting rid of cardinal principles of the law, on the assumption that a change might be for the better. I think it is always a matter for the gravest consider ation when your Lordships' House, the last Court of Appeal on matters connected with the law of this United Kingdom, is called upon to change the principles of the English Common Law. In this case you are asked to change one of them with extreme readiness, for none of its principles are more settled than that of parental authority. By a great Judge it has been called, in a remarkable and comparatively recent case, "the sacred right of the father to be the ruler in his own household," and any interference with the parental authority, so as to either abrogate or diminish it, should never be contemplated, except for the most weighty reasons. Now, I have heard no reason given of any satisfactory character to lead my mind to the conclusion that there is a feeling abroad of the existence of any extraordinarily great grievance upon this subject. Instances have been shown where philanthropic societies have been taken in. I am not aware of any charitable institution which has not been repeatedly taken in, and bringing forward 25 out of the thousands of cases which arise, in order to show misconduct on the part of parents in attempting to get back their children, after they have given them up, is, I think, useless. A parent cannot finally give up the custody of his children to another person, and divest himself of that which the Common Law imposes upon him, the right to control and the obligation of maintaining his children. This Bill has received no approval from any noble Lord on principle. I, too, object to it on principle. But, if possible, I object to it still more in detail. A more singular production I have seldom read. For example, in the 2nd clause it says that a Bench of Magistrates is "to have regard to the religion of the parents." If a very conscientious man, or I will call him an over-conscientious man, sees that a child is of a religion which he abhors, he ought, if he does what he thinks right, to order the child to be taken from persons who are of that religion and given into the charge of persons who will bring it up in another faith. To "have regard to the religion of parents" is one of the vaguest and most unmeaning phrases which it is possible to introduce into an Act of Parliament. The noble Earl who introduced this Bill said that the principles of our law are often amended. So they are; but only for grave reasons. But as I read this Bill it is not only the principles of the law that are to be violated, but the Decalogue itself is to be interfered with by this measure, for children are to be freed from all obligations of respect or obedience to their parents. I thought one of the Commandments was "Honour thy father and thy mother," not an "adopted father and mother." Then, Clause 6 provides that a child of 14 years is to have a voice in its adoption. Why should not an intelligent child 13 years of age have the same privilege? Why should the age of 14 be fixed upon as the limit at which a child is to be allowed to protest against being deprived of the natural guardianship of its own father and mother, and handed over to strangers. In this clause, too, the child is looked upon rather as an atom, for he or she is called an "it." The proviso is—

> "If it consents to its proposed adoption,"

whereas in Clause 8 the "it" is properly translated into a "he" It says that a child so adopted shall be deemed the child of the foster parents,

> "For the purposes of inheritance by such child and his descendants, and husband, or wife."

But if the child were a "he," he could scarcely have a husband. Then by Clause 10 it is provided—

> "If on any application for adoption it shall appear that the child intended to be adopted has neither father nor mother nor guardian, nor next-of-kin, or having such,"

that they are lunatic, or in prison, and so on. As if it were the same thing to be a lunatic or to be in prison. A parent might have been imprisoned for what, after all, was but a venial offence, or one of a not very immoral character, for instance, for committing a slight assault; and yet, if once committed to prison, then during his incarceration his child may be adopted upon an affidavit sworn by an intelligent foster parent, and when the man comes out of prison he will find that he has been deprived of his child, not because he was a lunatic, and therefore unfit to have the custody of it, but because he has been temporarily committed to prison. Really I should only be detaining the House if I were to go through what I must call, with the greatest respect to the noble Earl, the many absurdities of this Bill. It is a most dangerous kind of legislation, although it may have been prompted by philanthropic motives. The whole law of the descent of real estate is put aside by the Bill; the Statute of Distributions is set aside by it; in fact, a branch of our law of the most important character is interfered with by the provisions of this Bill, dealt with in the most summary manner, and its application handed over to the discretion of any Bench of Magistrates at Petty Sessions. Nobody has greater respect than myself for the Magistrates at Petty Sessions, when they are employed in their own proper business; but if there be a subject which more than any other has to a great extent exercised the highest Courts of the realm, it is the settling of a principle on which a parent shall be deprived of the custody of his children for misconduct, or for other reasons. The instances are numerous in which Judges have differed in opinion. In proper cases the Sovereign, as *parens patriæ*, has delegated to the Court of Chancery the care and custody of children, in order that they should not be taken possession of by parents who have been guilty of misconduct. But interference with parental control is a branch of the law which has always been regarded as of the greatest difficulty, and yet it is now proposed that the administration of that branch of the law which has been found of the greatest difficulty by men of legal training, and most eminent authority, is to be handed over to any Bench of Magistrates at Petty Sessions in the United Kingdom! Everyone who knows anything of Petty Sessions will recognise how soon there would be a contest there, as to who should capture the children. I am sure nobody who knows the noble Earl would fail to acquit him of any proselytising ideas, but though he is not to be charged with any idea of that kind the Bill would lead to that result. For those reasons I am glad that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has opposed the Bill, but I hope that he will go further and move that it be read again this day six months.

*Lord THRING: My Lords, after what has been said, I have very little to add in reference to this Bill. My noble and learned Friend who spoke last has been very successful in pointing out its defects, in laughing at the philanthropic efforts of its supporters, and in urging the necessity of maintaining the sacred rights of a parent to bring up his children in the gutter, in sin, misery, and dirt. But if any noble Lord who is of that opinion, had sat as I have done in two Sessions upon inquiries into the conditions of the poor, once on the Sweating Committee, and again on the Poor Law Committee, he would know that there is a great evil existing which this Bill seeks to remedy; and therefore, although the Bill may not be well-adapted for that purpose, it ought not to be ridiculed or laughed at. Case after case was brought before the Committee, of which my noble Friend Lord Kimberley was Chairman, in which it was proved that female children who had been brought up by kind and good people to be chaste and good members of society, were, at the time of greatest danger when they were just reaching womanhood, claimed by their parents for the vilest purposes, and were delivered up beyond doubt for those purposes. My Lords, are those facts to be laughed at, simply because the form of this Bill does not please the noble and learned Lord? I say there is a great and grievous evil existing, and an immediate necessity that the law should be so altered as to give greater protection to those benevolent people who rescue children from misery and vice, and are afterwards compelled by a harsh law to hand them back to parents who are unworthy to have any power over them.

*THE EARL OF MEATH: My Lords, before this discussion closes I should like to say a few words. In the first place, I must thank the noble Lords upon my right, who have kindly supported, not the Bill, for that they have not done, but the view which I take, and which the majority of your Lordships seem to take, that there is a necessity for legislation upon this subject. We have heard a great deal about the cardinal principles of English law, and about the sacred rights of a father; but I would ask, what are the sacred rights of a father? Are they that he shall permit his child to be degraded? Is that a sacred right of a father? Has he a sacred right to take his daughter to be prostituted? That, my Lords, is what is going on at present. But I would ask the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack whether it is not the fact, when he tells us that it is contrary to the law of England that children should be taken from their parents, that that power is possessed and constantly exercised by the Court of Chancery?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: If the noble Earl will forgive me, I did not say so. What I said was that such a bargain as that which he describes as solemnly taking place before a magistrate would have no operation according to English law.

*THE EARL OF MEATH: Anyhow, my Lords, I believe the Court of Chancery does interfere to take a child from the custody of its parent. There was a well-known case in which a respectable Dissenting minister was left a legacy of £500 on condition that his child was taken from his custody. The Court of Chancery decided that this sacred principle of English law could be broken in that instance, and the child was taken from the custody of its father because he accepted the legacy. Where is this "sacred principle of the law of England," I should like to know, after that? I do not think the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack will deny that that is a fact, and that the custody of that child was taken away from the father. It has been with great pleasure that I have heard the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) suggest to Her Majesty's Government that they might bring in a Bill to effect this purpose; and I do sincerely hope that instead of contenting themselves with criticising my Bill and the Bills of other people they will come forward and do something in this matter. I am not a lawyer myself, and I do not profess to be one; and I should very much like to see some of the lawyers in the House come forward in this matter. Let us have the thing done; I do not care at all how it is done; and it can, I think, be best done by Her Majesty's Government.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Does the noble Earl proceed with his Motion for a Second Reading?

*THE EARL OF MEATH: No; I withdraw.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

Bill (by leave of the House) withdrawn

PRESENTATION TO BENEFICES BILL.

(No. 58.)

House in Committee (on Re-commitment) (according to order).

Bill reported without further amendment.

THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD: I shall ask your Lordships to consent to a few slight alterations which it is desirable to make in the Bill. They are merely literal mistakes or errors by inadvertence. But in Clause 9 it is provided that the office of Trustee shall be vacated under certain circumstances. One of them is, if the Trustee shall reside abroad for a period exceeding 12 months. I believe that is not an uncommon provision in other Trusts, and it is not unreasonable, because, where Trustees require to meet constantly, such a prolonged absence should be a disqualification. But in this case, where the Trusteeship is only that of a living, it seems to be a somewhat vexatious provision that if a Trustee resides abroad for a period exceeding 12 months his tenure of the office should cease. I would therefore ask your Lordships' consent to the excision of those words.

Further Amendments made; Bill to be read 3^{a} on Monday next.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL BILL.
(No. 12.)

House in Committee (on Re-commitment) (according to order); Bill reported without amendment; and to be read 3^{a} on Monday next.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 59.)
SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount Cross): My Lords, at the time this Railway Scheme was practically framed the usual stipulation was made for a proviso that the Government might buy it within a certain time. In accordance with that provision notice had to be given in March last. That notice has been given by the Secretary of State in Council, and this Bill is simply to provide the funds required for the purpose, which will effect a saving of £36,000 a year to the Indian Revenue.

Bill read 2^{a} (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, That the Committee have added the Earl of Kimberley to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c., for the consideration of the Open Spaces Bill. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock,
to Monday next, a quarter before
Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 25th April, 1890.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table; and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

CHARITABLE TRUSTS (RENT-CHARGES).

Return ordered—

"Of Rent-Charges subject to Charitable Trusts in the County of Hereford, returned as paid in the Reports of the Commissioners for inquiring concerning Charities, 1819-37, and not now paid (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 309, of Session 1889.)"—(*Mr. Rankin.*)

KEW AND PETERSHAM VICARAGE BILL (No. 229) (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. Deputy Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, pursuant to the Order of the House of the 21st day of April, That, in the case of the following Bill, no Standing Orders are applicable, namely, Kew and Petersham Vicarage Bill.

MOTION.

HARES AND RABBITS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Williams, Bill to amend the Law relating to the killing and taking of Hares and Rabbits, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Samuel Evans, Mr. Lloyd Morgan, and Mr. Lloyd-George.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 235.]

QUESTIONS.

LICENCE DUTIES—THE "BETTERMENT" PRINCIPLE.

Mr. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in arranging for the compensation of publicans deprived of licences, he will apply the principle of "betterment" by establishing a compensation fund, to which shall be contributed, either by increased Licence Duties or direct payments, an equivalent of the augmented value of the property and business of the publicans remaining licensed and possessed of a fixed monopoly of the trade?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is really confined to devising means; the licensing question will be in the hands of my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board. The Government are hastening on as best they can the preparation of a measure on this subject; and therefore it will be better to refer the hon. Member to the provisions of that measure when it is produced, rather than to give explanations across the floor of the House.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Can the right hon. Gentleman give the House any idea when the Bill dealing with this matter will be ready?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Probably in the course of the next three or four days.

THE GLASGOW POLICE.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the attention of the Secretary for Scotland has been called to two Memorials sent to him by the police constables of Glasgow urging the adoption of the Government model scale of pay in their case, and to the fact that Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland has, in successive Annual Reports, supported the prayer of the Memorialists; and whether it is proposed to take any action in the matter?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): Two Memorials of the nature referred to in the question have been received by the Secretary for Scotland, and though, in some of his Annual Reports, the Inspector of Constabulary has expressed general approval of the adoption of the model scale of pay throughout Scotland he has not, so far as I am aware, made any special reference in those Reports to the Glasgow Police Force, or to the prayer of the Memorialists. The Secretary for Scotland has communicated with the Local Authorities who have absolute discretion in the matter; but they have declined to give effect to the request of the Petitioners. It is not proposed to take any further action in the matter.

THE SCOTCH MAILS.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, considering the large surplus in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the financial year 1889-90, he is now prepared to make such arrangements for the earlier delivery of southern mails in Dingall, Cromarty, Tain, Dornoch, Wick, and Kirkwall, particularly the two latter, as was recently asked for?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, University of Cambridge): I do not think I should be justified in incurring additional expenditure on the Mail Service to the Highland District; but, as already stated, in reply to a question which the hon. Member put to me on the 17th, I am considering whether improved arrangements can be effected without a further charge on the Revenue. The hon. Member should be aware that the repetition of questions on this point can only tend to prejudice the satisfactory result of any negotiations carried on with this object.

MEETINGS OF POST OFFICE OFFICIALS.

Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that he has issued a Circular containing the following Regulations with respect to meetings held for discussion of official questions by telegraph and Post Office servants outside Post Office buildings:—

> "1. That ample notice be given to the local Post Office authorities that such meeting will be held, and where;
>
> "2. That the meeting will be confined to Post Office servants, and to those Post Office Servants only who are directly interested in matters to be discussed;
>
> "3. That an official shorthand writer is present if required by the authorities;
>
> "These Rules apply both to telegraphic and Post Office servants. Should any meeting be held hereafter in respect to which the foregoing conditions are not complied with, those who take part in it will be held strictly responsible for the breach of the Rules;"

and whether there is any precedent for such restrictions upon the right of telegraphic and Post Office Civil servants to meet and discuss questions affecting their position and interests?

*MR. RAIKES: It is the fact that a Circular has been issued to the effect stated by the hon. Member. At least, one precedent I can mention and that within the Post Office itself; for until this Circular was issued the Rule, as it has existed for nearly a quarter of a century, was absolutely prohibitory. As I stated only yesterday, the Circular is in relaxation and not in restraint.

MR. A. WILLIAMS: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table the exact terms of the Rule which prohibits these meetings?

*MR. RAIKES: Yes, Sir; I have no objection to do so, if the House desires it.

MR. A. WILLIAMS: I beg to give notice that I will take an early opportunity of calling attention to the subject, with the view to asking the House to affirm the undoubted right of Civil Service *employés* to discuss their grievances free from official intimidation or interference.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS—MINUTES OF THE LATE AND PRESENT VICEROYS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is a fact that the late Viceroy and the present Viceroy of India have, in Minutes, severally addressed to the Secretary of State, expressed opinions in favour of the introduction of the elective principle in any reform of the Indian Councils; and, if so, whether he will lay such Minutes upon the Table of the House?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Papers asked for in the question are confidential communications which have been made by the Viceroys of India to the Secretary of State. It has already been stated in both Houses of Parliament that these Papers cannot be given, with due regard to the interests of the Public Service. Publication of such documents would put a stop to those confidential relations between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy of India, which it is essential to maintain. As the Papers cannot be produced, I cannot answer the inquiry as to the nature of their contents.

THE INDIAN FINANCE COMMITTEE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can now state whether any, and which, of the recommendations made by the Indian Finance Committee on 20th December, 1886, have been accepted and acted upon, and what are the savings, specifying such savings, which have been effected?

*SIR J. GORST: The recommendations which have been adopted and are now being acted on are:—Arrangements with Provincial Governments in 1887 Rx640,100; further reductions in provincial expenditure Rx57,480; reorganisation of Public Works Department Rx157,500; allowances for hill stations and Simla travelling allowances Rx12,600; various (Salt and Customs, High Courts, Presidency allowances, &c.) Rx45,540; supplementary proposals Rx182,648, being a gross total of Rx1,095,868. Some of these reductions, although accepted, can only take place gradually.

GOVERNMENT WRITERS.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the total number of Writers now upon the Register; how many are in receipt of bonus under the Treasury Minute of December 21st, 1886; how many have accepted the gratuity and retired; how many are still eligible to compete for vacancies in the Second Division; how many were recommended for promotion to the Lower Division by the Heads of their Departments, under the Treasury Minute of 21st December, 1886; and how many were actually promoted?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Total number now on Register, 961; number in receipt of bonus under Treasury Minute, 1886, 534; number who have retired with a gratuity, 259; number still eligible to compete, 152; number nominated for promotion, 81; number actually promoted, 70; number appointed to other situations in the Civil Service, 13.

METHYLATED SPIRITS.

MR. **BARING** (London): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether spirits imported for methylation should have a return of the duty on re-exportation; and, if not, why not?

*MR. **GOSCHEN**: Subject to the payment of the differential duty or surtax of 4d. in the case of foreign spirits used for methylation, methylated spirits are either prepared from spirits upon which duty has not been paid, or, in the case of a rectifier of spirits, from duty-paid spirits upon which a drawback of the duty of Excise is allowed at the time of methylation. There is not, therefore, any duty to be returned upon the exportation of methylated spirits.

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES AND TAXATION.

MR. **CALDWELL** (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would propose an alteration of the law whereby all Limited Liability, Joint Stock, Civil Service, and Co-operative Societies would be treated as units for purposes of taxation without rebate to individual members?

*MR. **GOSCHEN**: No, Sir; I should not be prepared to propose an alteration of the law which would practically involve that persons with a less income than £150 should pay Income Tax. That is not a policy which I should be prepared to endorse.

THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF MINES.

MR. **MACDONALD CAMERON**: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware that there are assayers, metallurgists, and mining men who are in the habit of using the initials that denote the Associateship of the Royal School of Mines, but who have not graduated at that Institution; and whether the Council of the School is in a position to effectually deal with such persons; and, if not, whether he will take steps to invest the Council with the power necessary to do so?

THE **VICE PRESIDENT** OF THE **COUNCIL** (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): General statements to the effect have, I believe, been made, but no specific cases have been brought to my knowledge. If any such are laid before the Department, the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown will be taken on the subject.

THE ESSEX MILITIA.

MAJOR **RASCH** (Essex, S.E.): I had intended to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Essex Militia are to be placed under canvas on 28th April; and whether it is usual to place unseasoned troops under canvas so early in the year; but at the request of the right hon. Gentleman I beg to defer the question.

THE WRECK COMMISSION.

DR. **TANNER** (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if there is any intention of filling the position held by the late Mr. Rothery over the Wreck Commission; how long the position has been vacant; and if it is correctly stated that in this Office great difficulty exists in consequence of the staff of clerks having no responsible chief?

*THE **PRESIDENT** OF THE **BOARD** OF **TRADE** (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): No, Sir. There is no present intention of filling the position referred to. The late Wreck Commissioner died on the 1st of August, 1888. I am not aware of any difficulty having arisen in the late Wreck Commissioners' Office, as suggested in the hon. Member's question.

TEA AND CURRANT DUTIES.

MR. **CHANNING** (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered the complaints of grocers who have recently laid in large stocks of tea, and also the complaints of Co-operative Distributive Societies who have large stocks of tea and currants; and whether he will, by a repayment of the whole or part of the duty, or by a postponement of the dates at which the new scales of duty are to come in force, minimise the loss to such traders and Societies?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I am afraid I can only give the same answer as I gave yesterday. I would point out to the hon. Member that in the case of Co-operative Associations the members will gain by the lower prices what the Associations might lose in profit.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): At what date will the reduction of the Tea Duties take place?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The 1st of May.

IRELAND—MR. PERCY MAGAN, J.P.

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether he has yet decided what course he will take in reference to the charge of fraud under the Arrears Act brought against Mr. Percy Magan, J.P.; whether he has taken any steps to ascertain who derived pecuniary benefit from the alleged false representation made in the joint application; and whether, if he entertained any doubt as to the truth of the charges which have been made, he has availed himself of the offer made to him to furnish further evidence in support of them?

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): In consequence of a former question of the hon. Member I communicated with the Land Commission and have been furnished with the receipt given by Mr. Magan, which does not substantiate the charge of the hon. Member.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Is it not the fact that the landlord in this case made an affidavit that the rent of a certain holding was due and was not paid at a time when it appears from the landlord's own receipt that it had been paid? Under the circumstances, is it not the duty of the Government to institute a prosecution?

*Mr. MADDEN: The suggestion made was that Mr. Magan had made an affidavit which was not true. On comparing the receipt with the affidavit I found that the affidavit applied to a holding of £15 a year, whereas the receipt was for £8 15s. Therefore, there is no *primâ facie* case upon which I can act. Mr. Magan has offered to give any information and submit to any investigation that may be considered necessary.

*Mr. SEXTON: How is it that the Attorney General in the vindication of the law has not thought it necessary to institute an inquiry? As there was only one holding it is manifest that the receipt must have referred to it.

*Mr. MADDEN: No, that is not manifest. The charge was simply based upon an allegation which the documents do not support.

Mr. SEXTON: Has the right hon. and learned Gentleman inquired whether there is any other holding?

*Mr. MADDEN: As I have already said, the receipt refers to a rent of £8 15s., and the affidavit deals with a holding at £15 a year.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to give notice that I will take an early opportunity of showing that the Irish Executive are endeavouring to screen criminal conduct which it is their duty to prosecute.

THE MAGHERAFELT UNION.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether complaints have reached him that at the recent election of Guardians for the Magherafelt Union the Returning Officer accepted and treated as valid the nomination paper of one of the candidates (Mr. Mann), although delivered to the Returning Officer at his private address, and not, as required by the rule, at the place fixed by the notice of election, *i.e.* the Board room of the Union; and that the Returning Officer at the same time, though not competent to take evidence on oath, made a private inquiry to prove that the nomination paper of Mr. Mann's opponent had not been signed with the proper signature of the nominator, and, having rejected the nomination paper on this ground, returned Mr. Mann as elected unopposed; and whether the Local Government Board propose, under these circumstances, to hold the usual inquiry as to the validity of the election, so as to permit of the question being tried in a Court of Law?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): It is the case that a complaint was received by the Local Government Board in regard to the recent election of Guardians for the Magherafelt Union. The Board, however, found on inquiry that the nomination paper was delivered to the Returning Officer within the prescribed time, and, following precedent, they ruled that the fact of its delivery having been at that officer's residence did not invalidate it. A complaint was also received by the Board regarding the rejection of the other nomination paper as invalid by the Returning Officer, which he had done on the ground that he had satisfied himself that the paper had not been signed by the ratepayer nominating. The complainant was thereupon afforded an opportunity of forwarding a written statement from the ratepayer in question, to the effect that he himself had signed the paper, but no such statement has been received by the Board. From the facts submitted to the Local Government Board there appears to be no ground for directing a sworn inquiry to be held.

THE INHABITED HOUSE DUTY.

Mr. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in drafting the Bill embodying the great concessions which he has made in the matter of the incidence of the Inhabited House Duty, he will consider the present position, in reference to this tax, of professional men and others, particularly those keeping schools, who have no option but to pay rents out of all proportion to their means and to their requirements as private persons, with a view of giving them at least the same relief as he proposes to give to the keepers of lodging houses?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I am not prepared to open any further questions this year with regard to remissions in the House Duty.

THE PLATE DUTIES.

Mr. H. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is true that a shipping house has offered duties in plate to re-land the plate which has been exported, so as to enable them to re-ship it again?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I have heard of that plan—or that scheme, perhaps, would be the more proper appellation; but, fortunately, there are existing means to check it and I am glad to be able to state the fact publicly, namely, that the drawback will only be paid where a declaration is made that the plate was exported without any intention of re-landing or re-importing it. Therefore, any persons who would re-export plate under the invitation of such a circular would probably render themselves liable to an action for having signed a bond under what might possibly be considered false pretences. At all events, I am glad to say that, though a shipping agent did send circulars to the whole trade, there has been little or no response to the tempting invitation, and the great bulk of the trade have abstained from having recourse to such methods.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is correctly reported as having said that he has not yet decided as to the Plate Duty, and if in any case, having regard to the large number of intricate technical questions involved in the abolition of the duty which, unless carefully considered with the advice of experts, will involve the trade in serious loss, he proposes to postpone the coming into operation of the new order of things?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I must have been misreported yesterday. The only question I understood to be put to me was with regard to the question of gold plate and not silver plate. With regard to silver plate, there has been no hesitation whatever. It would be most inconvenient to postpone the date, especially in view of measures which might be taken, such as were alluded to by the hon. Gentleman opposite. Every measure necessary has been taken in concert with men thoroughly acquainted with the trade, and little difficulty is expected in carrying out the matter satisfactorily.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I rise to ask the First Lord of the Treasury a question with regard to the Allotments Bill, on the Paper today. The First Lord will remember that when the House was asked to consent to Morning Sittings, there was, I think, a distinct engagement given that Morning Sittings would be used for purposes of Supply. I want to ask at what hour, and on what grounds, the Allotments Bill was last night put down on the Paper for to-day, and on what grounds the arrangement entered into was departed from?

*Mr. CHANNING: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, I wish to ask whether he is aware that the notice with reference to the Allotments Bill was not given in the *Times* this morning, the *Daily News*, or any other London newspaper to which hon. Members usually refer in order to ascertain what the business of the day is?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman has spoken of a distinct engagement to him or to the House as to the application of Morning Sittings. I must remind him I distinctly declined to come to an engagement as to the manner in which the Morning Sittings would be used. I said that they would be primarily used for Supply, but that we retained our liberty to put down for those sittings Bills which we were desirous to forward. This Bill was put down for this Sitting last night, standing, as it did, very high on last evening's Paper, and, that there should be no mistake, the President of the Local Government Board gave notice when the Order was reached, about 12.45 this morning, that it was intended to proceed with the Bill at this morning's Sitting. I really think that the right hon. Gentleman and his friends have no reason whatever to complain; and, as far as the hon. Gentleman is concerned, he was, I understand, in his place last night, and heard the statement made by my right hon. Friend.

*Mr. CHANNING: I do not understand that anything was agreed to as to the Allotments Bill until after the arrangement was made.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government announced, when the Order was reached, that they proposed to take it to-day at 2 o'clock, and when the question was asked whether it would be really proceeded with at 2 o'clock, my right hon. Friend got up and said that it would.

Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): This is a question in which I take a great deal of interest. This attempt to snatch the Allotments Bill is one of the most extraordinary things I have ever known. It is quite true to say that when the First Lord of the Treasury obtained the Morning Sittings the right hon. Gentleman said that Friday should be taken for Supply, although it might be reserved in exceptional cases. That was the impression produced on my mind; and with reference to a Bill of importance, surely that meant that if the Morning Sittings were used for other purposes there should be adequate notice given to the House that such other business would be taken. It certainly was never intended that at 1 o'clock in the morning, when Supply had been put down on the Paper, and when all the newspapers reported that Supply would be taken, a Bill of this character should be taken without any notice whatever. Unless hon. Members have some particular reason for remaining in London, they very often go away on a Friday; and I am told that the hon. Member for the Rugby Division of Warwickshire (Mr. Cobb), who has the first Instruction on the Paper relating to this Bill, is not present, but is engaged in visiting his constituents, because he had no idea that the Bill was coming on for discussion. Does anyone believe that this arrangement will be satisfactory to the persons interested? The only knowledge I have had that the Bill was coming on to-day was the receipt of a postcard at 1 o'clock this morning from my hon. Friend the Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing). This is not the way in which the business of the House ought to be dealt with. I protest against the Government proceeding by means of a surprise with this Bill in the absence of a large number of Gentlemen who take a great interest in the subject. It is not fair to do so, neither is it according to the spirit of the understanding arrived at with respect to Morning Sittings. I was never more astonished than I was this morning when I received the postcard informing me that the Allotments Bill had been put down for to-day.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I should be sorry to see the time of the House consumed by anything approaching to a warm discussion. I still maintain the opinion that it was a reasonable arrangement to place the Allotments Bill first on the Paper for this day; but as hon. Gentlemen who take an interest in the subject desire further notice, I am quite willing that it should be given. Accordingly I beg to give notice that the Bill will be taken next Tuesday morning.

*DR. CAMERON: I rise to ask a question on a point of order with reference to the business of the House. In the Blue Papers issued this morning I find that the Motion of the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow (Mr. Provand) with reference to raisins and dried fruits, which stood for this evening, is entered as being "deferred from Friday, April 25, till an early day." The same observation applies to the Motion of the hon. Member for Crewe (Mr. M'Laren) with reference to the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women. In the Blue Paper as issued this morning the first Order for the Evening Sitting is put down as Ways and Means, and there is no Amendment on going into Committee; but on the White Order Paper I find that the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for the Blackfriars Division with regard to raisins and dried fruits replaced as an Amendment on going into Committee of Ways and Means. I therefore wish to know whether the Motion with regard to raisins and dried fruits, having been postponed from this day, it is now competent to put it down for to-day; and, secondly, whether, the Order Paper being clear of Amendments, it is competent for the Government to put down effective Supply and go on with it; and whether it is competent for hon. Members who wish to bring forward Motions on going into Committee of Supply to do so during the present Sitting, so as to enable them to raise discussion on questions in which they are interested.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is unnecessary to answer the first question, inasmuch as I learn that the entry in the White Paper with reference to the Motion on dried fruit is an error. The statement in the Blue Paper that the Motion is deferred to another day is correct. As to the question of the power of the Government to put down Supply for this evening, it is undoubtedly within their power to do so; but it is not within the power of any hon. Member to-day to put down a notice of Amendment.

*DR. CAMERON: May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, seeing that no one could have anticipated that Supply would be brought on this evening, he will undertake to say now that Supply will not be brought on?

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Supposing effective Supply to be taken, will the Government take Classes V., VI, and VII.; or will any other order of Votes be selected?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I should be lacking in my duty if I did not put down effective Supply for this evening, and especially when there are no notices of Motion to prevent the Chairman leaving the Chair. The Votes will be taken in the order in which they have already been proceeded with.

*DR. CAMERON: I wish to ask, as a point of order, whether it will be competent for hon. Members, on the Question being put that the Speaker leave the Chair, to call attention to different matters in which they are interested?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a Motion on which, no doubt, hon. Members can talk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES (NAVAL, MILITARY, AND POLICE) BILL.

(No. 146.) SECOND READING.

(3.10.) Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir J. Gorst.*)

MR. M. HEALY (Cork): I wish to point out that the Government, in the present Bill, are dealing with a very small part of the question. The Registration Laws at present are in an anomalous condition, and a good many strange decisions have been given by the Courts in Ireland regarding them. In one instance it has been held that a man fined for drunkenness who was sent to prison for non-payment of the fine had forfeited the franchise. It seems to me, therefore, that the Government have selected a small grievance as a ground for amending the law. I cannot see why these particular classes of the electorate should be singled out by the Government for special treatment on this point; and I invite the Member of the Government in charge of the Bill to be kind enough to tell the House what is the meaning of its provisions.

*SIR J. GORST: The Bill is not a Registration Bill at all, but is a Bill really to give effect to the provisions of the Act of 1885. I think it is a Bill which has been more than once read a second time. Its object simply is to take away from soldiers and sailors that peculiar disability which they alone labour under, by reason of their being obliged to absent themselves from their homes, and the Bill simply provides that the absence from home of a soldier or a sailor, upon the orders of his superior, shall not be held to deprive him of the franchise. I hope this explanation will satisfy the House.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): The right hon. Gentleman laid special stress on the fact that the Bill deals with soldiers and sailors. But it deals with the police also.

*SIR J. GORST: Yes, certainly.

MR. STOREY: I have no objection to enabling soldiers and sailors to vote, or even that the police scattered over Ireland enforcing coercion should be enabled to vote. But I cannot see why the Bill should not include the sailors in merchant vessels—a larger and more important class altogether than those serving in the ships belonging to the nation. Under all the circumstances, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time upon this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Storey,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word "now" stand part of the Question."

*MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): While I am sorry that the Bill does not follow the lines of my Bill, and include such persons as railway servants, merchant sailors, clerks, and others, I cannot support the Amendment. I should be only too glad, however, to move Amendments in Committee.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Let me point out that the hon. Member would not be in order in going outside the title of the Bill.

*MR. WHITMORE: Then I shall endeavour to effect my object, and to remove this artificial disability altogether, by moving an Instruction to the Committee. I consider the opposition to the Bill unreasonable.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I feel strongly that this Bill ought not to be read a second time, and will, therefore, support the Amendment. I have no objection to the most complete enfranchisement of the people of this country, and have worked for it for a great number of years; but I do not think it is desirable to extend the franchise to those classes of the people alone who are under the influence of the Crown. There are a great many anomalies in connection with our Electoral Law, and I should prefer a measure which dealt with the whole of them. What will the House think of a case of this kind? A man is unable to find employment where he lives, and he goes elsewhere to seek it. While he is away an election takes place, and he finds himself disqualified. The sole object of the Bill is to increase the voting power of the Military and Naval Forces and of the police.

*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): This Bill is a remedy for an injustice which has been found to exist during the last few years, notably during the celebration of the Jubilee. Soldiers who were removed to Aldershot for only a week or 10 days were, nevertheless, held to have lost their votes, and the same law will apply to Volunteers who were away on military duty at Easter or Whitsuntide, or in the summer. It is unfair that men who are serving their country should be disqualified in the same manner as if they had been confined in the county gaol. I hope that both sides of the House will agree to remedy the injustice that now exists, irrespective of the way in which the votes given will be exercised.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I am unwilling to vote against a Bill for removing disabilities in the exercise of the franchise, and I only do so because this Bill makes distinctions between one class of electors and another. If the Government will give an assurance that they will accept a Motion for an Instruction to the Committee to extend the Bill to every class of persons under electoral disabilities, I will support the Second Reading of the measure.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling): I wish to express my cordial agreement with the views which the hon. Member has just expressed. I hope that Her Majesty's Government will accept this Instruction to the Committee, so that all anomalous disqualifications to which various classes of persons are subject may be removed by the Bill.

(3.28.) Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey), as I think there is a strong case for the postponement of the Bill. I object to the Bill as a political measure of an unfair description. Other classes of persons as well as servants of the Crown suffer under disabilities, and there is no reason why the Government should not bring in a Bill including them as well as Crown servants. Why should sailors in the Mercantile Marine not be included as well as sailors in the Royal Navy? Great dissatisfaction is caused in my constituency by the Militia losing their votes. The Superior Courts in Ireland have held that a man who is imprisoned for seven days for drunkenness because he is unable to pay the fine loses his vote. In dealing with these franchise questions the position and claims of Irish electors must not be left out of view. In Ireland if a man happens to be charged with drunkenness and fined, and in default of payment suffers imprisonment for an hour, he is forthwith struck off the roll. I would recommend the Government to withdraw this Bill, and in dealing with a matter of this kind, to include the many other anomalies and disqualifications that now exist. The present state of the law is such that if in West Belfast a person professing Nationalist opinions is convicted of intemperance, he is thrown off the register; but if he is an adherent of the Government, then it somehow happens that his identity is never discovered, and he remains on the register. For my part, I cannot consent to proceeding with the Bill, which tends simply to increase one political force. To a proposal to deal fairly with all anomalies and electoral disabilities, I am ready to give every consideration; but I shall vote against the Second Reading of this partial, insufficient, and politically unfair Bill, and shall be prepared to offer it every opposition on its future stages.

(3.32.) Sir J. GORST: I do not think it is decent in this House to speculate too confidently beforehand on the mode in which people who are justly entitled to the franchise will exercise that franchise when they get it. It is an extraordinary doctrine of the hon. Member that a Member of Parliament ought not to advocate the removal of grievances in which his own constituency is specially interested. To state the doctrine is to show its absurdity. The hon. Member has clearly not read the Bill when he says that it does not specify the Militia, because it expressly says "Naval and Military Service shall include service in Her Majesty's Auxiliary Forces." As to the question of the hon. Member for Dundee, Her Majesty's Government will certainly give their support to any Instruction which may be moved on going into Committee which would have the effect of extending the exemptions given to naval and military and police voters to those other classes who were comprehended in the Bill brought in by the hon. Member for Chelsea last year.

*(3.35.) Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): After the declaration of the Government, which I understand to mean that they will include seamen of the Merchant Service in the provisions of the Bill, I have no hesitation in voting for the Second Reading. It is a great pity that time should be wasted upon a matter that is made quite clear.

(3.35.) Mr. STOREY: As Mover of the Motion, I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that I heard, with great pleasure, the suggestion of the hon. Member for Dundee. My own desire is to have as many people included in the franchise as possible. I have listened now to the promise of the right hon. Gentleman, and I shall be glad if he will inform me if I am correct in assuming that to be a promise that all other classes who are at the present time under similar disabilities to soldiers and sailors of the Crown should be brought under the Bill on a Motion which will have the support of Her Majesty's Government? I do not want to state whom it shall include. I want to include all classes. But there is another and more important question to which I should like an answer. I do not think the hon. Member for Northampton would have been in such a hurry to promise the Government his support if he had read the 3rd clause of the Bill, and seen what the Bill does for soldiers and sailors of the Crown, without being previously sure——

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: It is quite clear that the acceptance by the Government of such an Instruction will involve Amendments to the clause which will have to be moved in Committee; this is not a Second Reading question.

Mr. STOREY: Yes; but let me point out to the hon. Member, who seems to think that everything is well——

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. STOREY: I said, seems to think. May I ask attention to Clause 3, which provides that should a soldier, sailor, or policeman be sent away on duty for four months, or a less time, in the case of a police constable he shall be allowed to go to his chief constable and get a certificate, under which he may vote in any polling district in the borough? Now, I put this case, and must press it. A disability rests now upon a workman who, living at one end of a town may be——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Member that he has exhausted his right to speak.

Mr. STOREY: I desire only a word of explanation in reply to a question which I will put in the briefest form. I wish to know whether the declaration is equivalent to a promise on the part of the Government to put all disqualified classes on an equal footing, so that a workman in a large borough or city should be permitted, on a certificate, say, from the Mayor, to vote in the nearest and most convenient locality?

(3.40.) Sir HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers may I point out that the principle involved in the Bill is a very distinct one, namely, that exemption is founded on involuntary absence? I think the principle might fairly be recognised in the case of sailors in the Mercantile Marine and other persons who, in the pursuit of their legitimate trade, and not for the purpose of getting votes elsewhere, break their occupation. The Government, while accepting that principle, should not give a pledge as to the exact wording of the Instruction at the present stage.

(3.42.) Sir JOHN GORST: Perhaps I may be allowed to answer the question and describe the intention of the Government, which has been accurately put by the right hon. and learned Gentleman. I have not been able to obtain a copy of the Bill of the hon. Member for Chelsea which was before the House last year; but I may say that Her Majesty's Government are prepared to accept any Instruction to the Committee which will have the effect of extending the operation of the Bill to those other classes which were included in the Bill which the hon. Member for Chelsea introduced last year.

(3.43.) Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): Of course I attach importance to the concession, but at the same time I must regard it as wholly inadequate to meet the needs of the case. The Bill ought to include the cases of workmen who are absent under contract. [A gesture of assent from Sir J. Gorst.] Then I understand that workmen will be placed in precisely the same position in this respect as merchant seamen?

Sir JOHN GORST: Hear, hear.

*(3.44.) Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): If the claim arises in respect to seaman away on service there is certainly an equal claim on the part of engineers and others who, under the terms of their engagement, are required to go out to various parts of the world and superintend the setting up of machinery contracted for in this country. This sometimes involves an absence of many months in distant countries, and, of course, the occupation of residence is broken. These men are in every way qualified to exercise the franchise when they are at home, and certainly I think the Bill should be widened in its scope to include such cases as these.

(3.46.) Mr. M. HEALY: The concession offered is not quite clear, and the point raised by the hon. Baronet shows the necessity for a little explanation before the Debate terminates. It seems to me the Bill proceeds on wrong lines, and I do not think the concession will meet the points raised unless the Government will agree to go back to what was the old principle of constructive occupation. Formerly the Courts were content to consider the voter had fulfilled the condition of occupation if his wife or family continued to occupy the qualifying premises, even though the voter himself should have been absent for considerable periods. Without going into petty distinctions the Bill should proceed on this general principle, and the question of a man's exercising the franchise should not depend upon his having been absent from home for a day over or under four months. One other point has been referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast. The Irish Courts have decided that a man convicted of drunkenness and imprisoned in default of payment of fine shall lose his vote. Will the Government carry their concessions so far as to cover cases of this kind? It is a decision that would never be enforced in England, that a man should forfeit his right to vote simply from inability to pay a fine.

(3.55.) Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I have a copy of the Bill of the hon. Member for Chelsea last year which we may take as indicating what is intended to be the general scope of the present Bill, and certainly I think the readiest mode of proceeding would be to withdraw the present Bill and start again *de novo.* The whole scope and very title of the Bill will have to be altered. If we assent to the Second Reading now, it must be with the distinct understanding that we remove as far as possible all technical disqualification arising from break of occupation. Thus, if a man is absent in fulfilment of a contract for work undertaken, he should not be under disability, nor would it be fair to disqualify a man when he has been absent seeking work. Surely, also, the question of a day over four months' absence should not decide against the vote of a man otherwise qualified.

(4.0.) The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir E. Clarke, Plymouth): Instances have been given in which men, by reason of their being away at work, would lose their votes; but the Bill has been introduced to meet the case of soldiers, sailors, and constables who are held to be disqualified even when their absence is an involuntary one. It was pointed out at the beginning of the discussion that the Bill, if it is passed, will confer a benefit only upon certain classes of public servants; and it was said that the Government, and particularly certain Members of the Government, are specially interested in the removal of this disqualification. An appeal was thereupon made to the Government, which was supported by the Member for the Stirling Burghs and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury, that the Bill should be extended so as to apply to the case of persons who are away under contract from their homes during the qualifying period, and where, although to return home would not, as in the case of soldiers, sailors, and constables, be an offence, they cannot practically come back whenever they like. It was suggested that the Bill, as drawn, will exclude merchant seamen and a number of valuable workmen who are sent abroad for a limited time in pursuance of their avocations; and it was proposed that the Bill should be amended in that respect. The Government will accept that Instruction, so that there is now no longer any reason for quarrelling with the Bill on the ground that it refers only to a limited class, having a special interest, because, in its amended form, it will refer to all persons who are away during the qualifying period under contract for a temporary purpose. Under these circumstances, I hope there will be a unanimous acceptance of the Bill by the House, which, I believe, is extremely anxious to admit to the franchise people who have been away in pursuance of duty under contract. If the Member for Sunderland looks at the 3rd section he will see it only applies to constables on duty on the day of election.

Mr. HOWELL: Will engine drivers be included?

Sir E. CLARKE: There is no such provision in the Bill; but that would give ground for the hon. Member, if he thinks fit, to propose an Amendment in Committee.

Mr. STOREY: Will the Government agree to such an Amendment?

Sir E. CLARKE: I cannot answer that question now. It is most unusual to ask if the Government will, in regard to a Bill which is not in Committee, accept an Amendment which is not on the Paper, and the terms of which they have had no opportunity of studying. My acquaintance with the law of franchise in Ireland has not informed me that if a man does not pay his fine and goes to prison for the night for drunkenness he loses his vote. That, however, has nothing to do with the Bill. The Bill has for its object the securing to persons who, by hypothesis, have a right to vote, but who are often, in consequence of being employed away from their homes, deprived of the opportunity of exercising the franchise.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I should like to know whether it is intended that the word "contract" as applied to the Mercantile Marine shall be interpreted strictly or not, because I believe that sailors employed in the coasting trade do not enter into technical contracts. Contracts are confined to seamen who sail for foreign ports in the Merchant Service.

*MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): The Solicitor General said just now that he desired to remove disqualifications from all men who ought to have the right to vote. I am in favour of removing all disqualifications, and last year I was present when a similar Bill which the hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore) introduced was read a second time, and I cordially supported the Second Reading. Later, the same evening, the Second Reading of my Voters' Successive Occupation Bill was moved; but that was objected to by hon. Members opposite, whereupon I gave notice of a Motion to extend the scope of the Bill of the hon. Member for Chelsea. When the Motion came before the House, however, it was opposed by the Attorney General. I hope we are not going to be misled by any Government promise with regard to the extension of the operation of this Bill. I quite agree that soldiers, sailors, and policemen ought to have the franchise, but so ought all working men. The Successive Occupation Bill simply provided——

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member is referring to a Bill which is on the Order Book.

*MR. CAUSTON: I will only add that if we are going to remove disqualifications from soldiers, sailors, and policemen, we ought also to remove the disqualification from others. There are hundreds and thousands of men in London who are disqualified from voting, simply for the reason that they remove from one division of London to another, or change from lodgers to occupiers. Soldiers, sailors, and policemen go away to do duty in other parts of the country, and so do many working men, and because they happened to be compelled to remove so as to live near their work, they are, under the present law, disqualified for perhaps more than two years. I hope we shall have an assurance that if the operation of the Bill is going to be widened, it will be widened in a way that will prevent men being disqualified for the reasons I have stated in future. The Tory Party professed that it was always their desire that the working men should have a vote; but it seems to me, whenever it is possible, obstacles are placed in the way of their exercising the franchise.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, Basingstoke): I hope the House will allow this Bill to be read a second time. The scope of the Bill seems to be somewhat misunderstood. The Bill does not extend the franchise to soldiers and the coastguards, because they already possess it; but it merely provides that when they are qualified to be on the register of voters, they shall not be disqualified by reason of being called upon to do duty at some other place. There are many officers, sergeants, and others at Aldershot who have quarters given to them by Government; but if one them is required to serve, say, for three or four weeks elsewhere, he thereby breaks his occupation, and loses his vote The passing of this Bill would merely be an act of justice to such men.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): All of us on the Opposition Benches are pleased to find this great desire on the part of right hon. Gentlemen opposite to get rid of disqualifications with regard to voters; but in listening to this debate I have been struck with the fact that it leads to much difficulty to bring in a little Bill to deal with a large question. I am glad the Government have agreed to extend the scope of the Bill, but still I want to emphasise the fact that unless we get rid of all idea of contract, so far as the working classes are concerned, a large number of men will not receive the benefit it is intended they shall receive. Working men who temporarily leave their homes to follow their occupation do not do so under what is legally understood as a contract. I should like to hear whether the Government can give any heed to the argument put forward by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. M. Healy) with regard to the question of constructive occupation, because, if they can, they would widen the scope of the Bill very materially. I also think the Government ought to give attention to the point put forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Southwark (Mr. Causton). It is a well established fact that a vast number of the working classes in London are debarred from exercising the franchise because, owing to the exigencies of ther employment, it is necessary they should so frequently remove. You admit the difficulty surrounding the exercise of the franchise by the working classes, but this Bill only goes a little way towards meeting the difficulty.

*(4.15.) Mr. C. GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I merely wish to press the Government for a more definite answer than they have yet given us. The experience I obtained some two years ago, when the Mines Bill was under discussion, does not convince me of the expediency of leaving questions which the Government have promised to deal with by means of amendments unsettled. Perhaps that may be because I have not that infantile or elephantine faith in Governments which the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) seems to have, and because, unlike the hon. Member, I am not engaged in swallowing my life's convictions, and, putting myself up to auction for a place in either of the two Governments, and because I have no great joy in grovelling before those who kicked me and kept me out of the House —[Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order!] —who chucked me out at the hands of their ushers.

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I am not, generally speaking, in favour of giving votes to those who live upon taxes. If men choose to go out and play at soldiers, I think they ought to be prepared to take the risks which they necessarily incur. They, of course, do it with the full knowledge that they will be deprived of some portion of the rights of citizenship. What appears to me to be an extraordinary anomaly as regards this Bill is that the Government propose to give the right to vote to men who go out and play at soldiers while they deprive of the vote the working man who, in order to keep his family, is compelled to be away from his home following his occupation or in search of employment.

Sir J. GORST: The statement of the learned Solicitor General was that the man who left his home for the purpose of following his work would not, according to the existing law,. lose his vote.

*Mr. CREMER: I am very glad to hear that. It shows that we are getting on. It is an admission of a very equitable and sound principle. I have made a series of efforts for the last three years to bring the question of the removal of disabilities under the notice of the House and to get it dealt with in a fair and comprehensive manner. The Government having now opened the door, I hope it would not be closed until the whole question has been discussed and dealt with in a satisfactory way.

*Captain VERNEY (Bucks, N.): I feel it to be my duty to vote against this Bill. I cannot see why a soldier or a sailor is to be entitled to exercise political influence by means of voting. People learn how to give votes by attending meetings and consulting others.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member's remarks are beside the question.

(4.23.) Mr. GROTRIAN (Hull, E.): I am glad the Government have done something in the direction of the removal of disabilities, and that they are going to take a further step in the same direction. It is exceedingly pretty to hear what great interest hon. Members opposite take in the removal of disabilities. Perhaps it would not be in order to move an Amendment giving a vote to members of the Royal Irish Constabulary. If Members below the Gangway opposite are really in earnest in this matter, I hope they will take the first opportunity of conceding the franchise to the Irish Constabulary. I am especially glad that the Government are going to allow members of the Mercantile Marine to be included in the provisions of the Bill; and I should like to ask whether the term "sailor" will include firemen and fishermen?

Mr. STOREY: The promises given by the Government are so satisfactory that I beg leave to withdraw my Amendment.

*(4.25.) Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I have been in communication with the hon. and learned Member opposite, and understand that the Bill will practically remove disabilities from everyone. If so, I shall heartily

support the measure. I wish to know, however, whether a man who is working away from home without being under contract will obtain the benefits of the Bill?

Sir J. GORST: Such a person would not want it, because he would not be disqualified.

(4.27.) Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I should like to know whether this Bill will include miners working at a distance from home?

Sir J. GORST: No; they would not come within the scope of the Bill.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I shall support the Bill, because I think the disabilities of soldiers and sailors should be removed, and because I understand the Government will extend the Bill in the direction of removing disabilities from private individuals who are under contracts which compel them to absent themselves from their constituencies. Without expressing any definite opinion how, under the Ballot system, it would be practicable to provide for such cases, I may say that at the recent election in my constituency there were 150 or 200 railway men who were unable to vote because they had to be absent in the discharge of their duties.

Mr. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I wish to know whether it will be possible to allow fishermen to record their votes in the same way as constables?

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Tuesday next, at Two of the clock.

SUCK DRAINAGE [PROVISION OF FUNDS].

Resolution reported,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a portion of the Costs, Charges, and Expenses (to an amount not exceeding £50,000), which have been or may be incurred by the Drainage Board for the River Suck Drainage District."

Resolution read a first and second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. H. J. Wilson

(4.32.) Mr. STOREY: This is the smallest and least objectionable of the measures which were defeated last year. I am convinced by information which has reached me that when the money has been expended it will prove to have been absolutely wasted unless further expenditure is incurred. I shall feel it my duty, without extended debate, to divide the House in order to make clear my conviction that public money ought not to be expended in such operations in Ireland any more than in England or in Scotland. I admit the hardship of the case of private persons who have come to the end of their available resources in carrying out this scheme, but I submit it never has been the custom for this country to grant public moneys to private persons for carrying on private works.

(4.35.) Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I have opposed this measure on several occasions, and had I been allowed to be in my place in the House last Session I should then have objected to the schemes put forward by the Chief Secretary. The people who projected the works at Ballinasloe are altogether antagonistic to the Irish movement, and have been compelled to appeal to the Government for assistance, because their efforts have not been attended with success. Still, looking at the fact that a large number in the district are depending for their livelihood on the continuance of the operations, I shall support the Resolution, and I hope the House will allow the stage to be taken without further opposition.

(4.38.) Mr. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): It appears to me that the observations of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken would apply with equal force to the shutting up of any large works. That principle is so mischievous that I shall certainly support the hon. Member for Sunderland in dividing against the Resolution.

(4.40.) The House divided:—Ayes 245; Noes 95.—(Div. List, No. 58.)

Bill ordered to be brought by Mr. Arthur Balfour and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 236.]

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) (PLEURO-PNEUMONIA) [EXPENSES].

Resolution reported,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of an annual sum, not exceeding £140,000, towards defraying the cost of the execution, in Great Britain, of any Act of the present Session for conferring further powers under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, 1878 to 1886, with respect to pleuro-pneumonia; and of an annual sum, not exceeding £20,000, towards defraying the costs of the execution of the said Act in Ireland."

(4.55.) MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, E.): I should like to ask the First Lord of the Treasury a question with regard to the Bill which is to be founded on this Resolution. The right hon. Gentleman is no doubt aware that at the present time there are on the Paper pages of Amendments by Scotch Members bearing directly on financial questions; indeed, there is grave dissatisfaction in Scotland with the financial terms on which it is proposed to base the Bill. I wish to know whether the subject has been brought under the notice of the Government, and when it is intended to take the Bill?

*(4.56.) MR. W. H. SMITH: The subject has received the serious consideration of the Government, and they are now considering by what means they can make proposals which will be satisfactory to hon. Members for Scotland in reference to the charge which may possibly be imposed upon Scottish funds by the operation of the Bill. The Government hope to proceed with the Bill on Tuesday next. In the meantime, notice will be given of such changes in the measure as I hope will be found to be satisfactory.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES 1890-91.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS V.

1. £400,000, Exchequer Bonds (Cape Railway).

2. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £17,640, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for the Expenses of Various Services (other than Consular) in connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, and the Expenses of the Liberated African Department."

(4.59.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I am sorry that this Vote is to be taken at this hour, because there are several facts which have transpired on which some further explanations are requisite, and, indeed, important. I admit that the Government have only followed the usual precedent, but matters in regard to the Slave Trade have drifted into such an extraordinary position that we hardly know where we stand. I see that the contract for steamers between Aden and Zanzibar has been augmented by £9,000 this year. Now we are asked for another £16,000, and I should like to know if a new contract has been entered into with the company? What do we find? That this company is down for £16,000 to put down the Slave Trade, and they are actually employing slaves themselves. We find that these Chartered Companies, particularly the Lakes Company, employ slaves themselves. It is a montrous case of hypocrisy that we should pose before the world as paying a large sum of money for the suppression of the Slave Trade, while we are subsidising a company like this to the extent of £16,000 per annum, and that company is actually employing slaves. There is an Act which renders any English subject liable to penal servitude—I think it is for life—who owns a slave. Even assuming that these slaves are hired——

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I am sure the hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I say he is in error. The company with whom the contract is made is not the company to which he is referring — the East African Company, who have nothing to do with it.

MR. LABOUCHERE: It was admitted the other night that these companies practically belong to the same persons.

MR. JACKSON: No.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Am I to understand the hon. Gentleman that in no case these companies employ slaves? From what source has the right hon. Gentleman got his information? Does he know that they do not employ slaves? In any case, whether it be so or not, this sum is used for commercial purposes by this East African Company, which does employ slaves.

The CHAIRMAN: It is quite irregular on this Vote of a subsidy to the Steamship Company to discuss the conduct of the East African Company.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I have merely raised this point that this money is used for commercial purposes, and it is put down under the Slave Trade Vote. It is used in no way, except the most indirect, for the suppression of the Slave Trade. Therefore, we shall have to discuss in some sort of way the action of this East African Company. We ought not to allow this increased subsidy to be granted at the present moment. The Secretary to the Treasury will tell me that the contract will be laid on the Table, but we ought not to vote the money until we see the contract. I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman the advisability of putting off this Vote until we see the contract. I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £9,130, because I assume that the old contract which was £6,000 has been increased by £9,130, leaving out the Supplementary Estimates.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £8,510, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

(5.10.) Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I rise for the purpose of seconding the reduction of this Vote. We want to be informed what brings this sum into the Slave Trade Vote at all. I only wish to point out that we on this side did not introduce the East African Company. It was the Government who introduced the reference through the Member responsible for these Estimates, who had to inform the Committee as to the necessity for the increase of the subsidy. I was under the impression, having listened to the debate the other night, that the increase was made for the convenience of the East African Company. Of course, if the Secretary to the Treasury tells us that it is not so, I do not understand how the East African Company came to be mentioned at all. I think we are entitled, first of all, to ask why this subsidy to the Steamship Company appears in the Vote for the suppression of the Slave Trade, and also whether it has any indirect connection with the East African Company?

(5.13.) Dr. TANNER: I hold in my hand the Appropriation Account for the year 1888-9, and I find the amount the Committee is called upon to pay at the present time is £16,000, which, in point of fact, is an excess over last year of £9,130. When we find that £7,850, which was not on account of Slave Trade services, is passed under cover of this Vote, we see that the sum is increasing by leaps and bounds, and is really doubling the amount originally intended to be granted. I simply rose for the purpose of calling the right hon. Gentleman's attention to this matter. He is acquainted with the proceedings of the Committee on Public Accounts, where these matters were sifted, and he will recollect that attention was called in that Committee to the way in which this Vote was increased.

(5.15.) Mr. JACKSON: I think I can satisfy the hon. Member who has just sat down that the matter is clearly and perfectly in order. The Appropriation Account deals with 1888-9, the expenditure terminating on the 31st March, 1889. The amount there stated is the amount of the contract which was then in existence. Since that time there has been a new contract entered into. That contract has been laid on the Table and circulated among Members. It is for a larger sum.

Dr. TANNER: Double.

Mr. JACKSON: Quite so. In fact, it includes the Sea Service, and a quicker service, with calls at more places. The contract will have to obtain the approval of the House before it becomes legally binding, and I hope to lay it before the House in the course of a day or two. As regards the position of the Vote in the Estimates, it was a question when the Estimates were under consideration, whether the amount should be put under the Packet Service connected with the Post Office; but really the sum is paid much more for the suppression of the Slave Trade than for the purposes of the Mail Service. It is quite true that the mails are carried by these steamers, but I think I am justified in saying that it is intended much more for services connected with the Slave Trade. It is generally admitted that these vessels passing to and fro do exercise a beneficial influence in checking the Slave Trade. I suppose by multiplying the vessels that influence is increased. It was felt, further, in view of the general condition of things which prevails in the Red Sea, and the difficulties which have arisen during the past two years, that it would have been an extremely inopportune time to do anything which would weaken the means of communication with the fleet and the East Coast of Africa. The Government felt it desirable to enter into a contract for an improved service, and such contract has been entered into. Though it does appear an anomaly that a contract with a Steamship Company should appear in the Vote for the Slave Trade Service, yet there is much more connection between the two than at first sight appears. Reference has been made to the fact that the gentleman who is Chairman of the Steamship Company is also Chairman of the East African Company; but that does not necessarily imply that there is any connection between the two companies, except so far as concerns the action of that particular individual. I venture to say that there is no connection between this company and the East African Company, and perhaps it would have saved discussion had this explanation been made earlier.

(5.20.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I think it better to leave to the discussion on another Vote this discussion of the connection between the two companies, and to confine ourselves to the contract itself. I suppose we will be afforded opportunity of discussing the contract some time after midnight; but I think we had better utilise the present chance and daylight to examine this contract rather than trust to the tender mercies of the Secretary to the Treasury. On looking into the contract of the Steam Navigation Company I find that it was made without competition.

MR. JACKSON: That is not so, if the hon. Gentleman means that competition was not invited.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: That is not what I mean. No doubt competition was invited; but there was no competition, inasmuch as there is only one company running vessels in this part. The Chairman of that company is at the same time Chairman of the East African Company, and the contract is made not for a high rate of speed, only 10 knots an hour. The old contract was from Aden to Zanzibar, but the present contract is larger. The vessels are to touch at four places, all the stations of the East African Company. Another extraordinary point of the contract is that £7,000 is to be paid for carrying mails between London and Zanzibar. We have already abundance of mail contracts between London and Aden, the Indian mail contracts, and the China and Australian contracts. There is no need, so far as I can see, for a Mail Service between London and Zanzibar. The service between Aden and Zanzibar would have been ample for all purposes. Notwithstanding, the Steam Navigation Company, whose Chairman and many of the influential Directors, are also Chairman and Directors of the East African Company, are to have a largely increased subsidy. I cannot conceive what influence these mail contracts will have on the Slave Trade. The mail steamers do not stop to pursue slaves; they have no active part in the suppression of the Slave Trade; they simply carry letters to the Fleet, and I confess it does seem to me that this contract is tinctured with something in the nature of a job.

*(5.20.) SIR L. PELLY (Hackney, N.): Sir, I confine myself to the question of the British India Company plying along the East Coast of Africa, and to considering this question politically and commercially. It has been said that the commercial side of the subject has no relation to the Slave Trade. I venture to hold an entirely different opinion. I speak not without experience. I was actively engaged in the suppression of the Slave Trade 30 years ago on the East Coast of Africa, in the Persian Gulf, and in the principal Slave Groups. I was also a member of the anti-Slavery Mission in 1872-73. I venture to say that the running of mercantile steamers in the Persian Gulf and on the East Coast of Africa has a very close and direct connection with the Slave Trade, and in this way. Before the introduction of steamers trade is carried on by means of dhows. These ship a so-called crew from the East Coast, and proceed whether to Arabia, Persia, or other points in Asia. Most of the men thus shipped are slaves, and many of them are sold as slaves on the dhows reaching their Asiatic ports. This traffic went on

year after year. It was going on in 1860, and continued during the 12 years I was in serving on the Persian Gulf and on the East Coast of Africa. But when we got steamers into the gulf, and now that we are placing them on the East Coast of Africa, these steamers carry goods cheaper than they could be carried by the dhows, which in that way we cut out the dhow trade. The effect is to reduce the Slave Trade. In my belief, such a means of reducing that traffic is more effective than the employment of men-of-war. But, Sir, the argument would apply equally to the land. The more you introduce railways and civilised means of communication between the coast and the Upper Lake regions, the more will you tend to suppress the Slave Trade and prevent the ivory and other produce being brought down by slaves. With regard to the commercial aspect of the subject, I ventured to ask the British India Company what was the outcome of it? Their service began in November last. Since that time they have completed five voyages, and the average loss upon each voyage to the British India Company has been £1,500. If you compare what England does with what is done by other countries, you find that the German subsidy for steam communication on the East Coast is £45,000. Surely, if we want to develop our commerce, and indirectly, as I have shown by that very commerce tend to suppress the Slave Trade, surely, if we wish to maintain our Imperial position, and not be content with our insular position, we ought to be prepared to meet the sacrifices necessary. If we desire to stand before the world as intent upon the maintenance of our Empire, and as the antagonist of the Slave Trade, then we must pay for it. To pretend that we are anxious to develop Imperially, to pretend that we are a great and philanthropic people, anxious to put down slavery, and then to stickle over £16,000 is, to my mind, illogical and contemptible.

*(5.30.) MR. BRADLAUGH: Sir, I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the inclusion of this sum in the Vote is to be defended on the ground that it will tend to the suppression of the Slave Trade.

MR. JACKSON: I gave the mails as a subsidiary matter.

Sir L. Pelly

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Why is it that in the contract there is not a word directly or indirectly about giving anyone facilities for the suppression of the Slave Trade? If the mails are a subsidiary matter, why is it that all mention of the principal matter is omitted from the items stated? It is true that in the Treasury Minute, put in as a preface to this contract, there is a reference—almost as vague as that which came from the Secretary to the Treasury—to the British Mail Service to Zanzibar established in 1873 as a useful auxiliary to the suppression of the Slave Trade. I agree with the hon. Member who last spoke, that general civilisation does gradually bring about the suppression of slavery; but these subventions have nothing to do with that. The singling out of these Companies for the purpose of carrying letters from London to Zanzibar has nothing to do with that. You do not provide that, if a British Indian steamer comes across a dhow in the Red Sea or anywhere else, it has to go after it. I had not intended to take part in this discussion; but I do think that the Secretary to the Treasury should not presume so much on the general credulity of the House and the country as to offer in defence of the inclusion of an item in a Vote in which it should not appear that though it has nothing to do with the question of the suppression of slavery, generally speaking, the carrying of correspondence between civilised people tends in that direction. I defy the hon. Member to read one clause in the contract in which the Slave Trade is mentioned, or a single line which says that the company is to give any kind of assistance to anybody pursuing slave dhows. I defy him to read a word in it which says that there is to be any information given, directly or indirectly, to anybody as to the transport of slaves in consideration of this Vote. I hope the Financial Secretary to the Treasury—to whom we are often indebted for very agreeable explanations of financial policy—will add frankly to the information he has given us by saying that he does not defend the insertion of the item, and will leave it out next year.

(5.35.) THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): There is, no doubt, a great deal in what the hon.

Member has said; but I would ask the Committee to recognise that, after all, this is a criticism as to form. It is objected that this contract, being for other purposes than the suppression of the Slave Trade, ought not to appear under the Suppression of the Slave Trade Vote. I suppose the subsidy was originally given to the Steamship Company for carrying mails on this coast with the special object of aiding in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and that it has been allowed to continue in that form. In whatever form it appears, it is necessary. It is of the greatest importance that there should be speedy communication by mail steamer along this coast in order that Her Majesty's ships employed on the stations in that part of the world may communicate with the officers engaged in the suppression of the Slave Trade. I myself know of cases where information as to the probable movements of Slave Trading vessels has been carried by these mail steamers so as to lead to most important results. If such steamers were not employed I know of no way in which despatches from one station to another along this coast could be carried, except by a man-of-war. Undoubtedly, this country derives other advantages from this Mail Service than those connected with the suppression of the Slave Trade. I would, for instance, remind the Committee of the great and growing interests which this country has on the East Coast of Africa, and how much more important it is now than it was in times past that we should have a regular and speedy service. This line conveys mails as far as Zanzibar, and there it connects with another Mail Service to the Cape of Good Hope, furnishing a regular communication all down the East Coast of Africa. Surely hon. Members would not wish that this service should fall into the hands of foreign mail steamers —and the House has been told that the German Government pay a much larger subsidy to their mail line going down this coast than we pay ours. I venture to think that the House would not acquiesce in any proposal to hand over our communications in this direction to foreign mail steamers or to do anything which would render our Mail Service less speedy and efficient than that of any foreign country and less able to successfully compete with the foreigner than we are in other parts of the world. It is because this mail contract is for the benefit of our commerce, and because I believe that the reasons which originally led to the establishment of the service on the East Coast of Africa continue to exist at the present day, that I hope the Committee will assent to the Vote.

*(5.42.) MR. BRADLAUGH: Is there a word about this service in connection with the suppression of the Slave Trade in the contract?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: I do not think that that affects the matter. The assistance of the steamers in that direction, though subsidiary, is extremely valuable.

*MR. J. MACLEAN (Oldham): I must say that I think the argument of the right hon. Gentleman rather tends to show that this subsidy should not have been included under the head of the suppression of the Slave Trade. We have heard a great deal about the value of the Mail Service on the East Coast of Africa, and one can readily understand that a Mail Service of that kind must be of great importance to us for the purpose of helping us to maintain our power in that part of the world as against our rivals. But it is quite apparent from the speech of the hon. Member for North Hackney (Sir L. Pelly)—who has a right to speak with some knowledge on this question—that this service is really established for Imperial and commercial purposes in the first instance, and only in a subsidiary degree for the suppression of the Slave Trade. My hon. Friend quoted to the House figures to show that the British India Company is actually now carrying on the service at a loss. It has lost at least £1,500 on each of the last five voyages. Does anyone believe the company is going to carry on the service at a loss for the purpose of suppressing the Slave Trade? The object of the company is to serve its own interest and the interest of the allied companies with whom it is working out there. It is plain that this service is intended to serve the commercial interests of the British East African Company. The steamers run to Mombassa and other ports, and it must, therefore, be to the interest of the East African Company to encourage the service. I think this subsidy was regularly included in the Suppression of

Slavery Vote by what I may call a pious fraud on the part of Sir Bartle Frere. Having been out in this quarter of the globe, he declared that by the establishment of a line of steamers we should be indirectly going some way towards suppressing the Slave Trade. I have not yet heard anything from the Treasury Bench as to the way in which the Slave Trade has been suppressed by the establishment of this service. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs says that these steamers often carry information which enables British officers to intercept slave dhows; but I would ask him if he can point to a single instance where one of these steamers has deviated from her course for the purpose of rendering service to Her Majesty's Government in that way? No doubt the letters they carry give information. I am one of those who do not condemn what we are doing in East Africa; but I say the House ought to have information as to what is being done, and there ought to be no attempt to smuggle through a subsidy for a Mail Service under the head of the Suppression of the Slave Trade.

(5.45.) Mr. WADDY: We seem by degrees to be getting a little light thrown on this Vote. I do not think there is one of us who doubts that this item, instead of being an attack on the Slave Trade, is really a subsidy to a commercial company which appears to have two heads, one of which we are not allowed to deal with to-night, the defence of which is mainly conducted with great ability and perfect fairnesss by the hon. and gallant Member, who is, I believe, a Director of the company.

*Sir L. PELLY: Which company?

Mr. WADDY: The Imperial British East African Company.

*Sir L. PELLY: Yes.

Mr. WADDY: We are asked to grant a subsidy to a company which is a sister company to that I refer to on the plea that it is for the suppression of slavery, and it seems that the only connection it has with slavery is to be found in the argument that the more we cover the ocean with our own civilised vessels the less room there will be for others that are uncivilised, and the more information as to the doings of Slave Traders we shall obtain. According to that argument you should subsidise lines of steamers right round the coast of Africa, off the coast of Guinea, and in many other parts of the world. And it is said in support of the Vote, "Where would our Indian Empire have been if it had not been for these subsides to steamships, and where would our Australian Colonies have been?" Well, what has all this to do with the suppression of the Slave Trade? No one doubts that, in regard to the general spread of information, you can screw the question of the Slave Trade in or twist it in; but the same thing might be done in the case of Samoa, and almost all other wild and uncultivated parts of the world. I protest against this item going under the head of the Suppression of the Slave Trade when it really has nothing to do with it. There is nothing more deceptive than to put down the Estimates in this way, and I strongly object to this sum of £16,000 being put under the head of the Slave Trade Suppression Services.

(5.50.) Mr. JACKSON: May I make an offer to Gentlemen opposite? I will undertake that when the Estimates are framed next year the Mail Service Vote shall be removed from this heading and put with the general subsidies for these Services. I am sorry I cannot depart from what I have previously said as regards the original provision made on this subject. The Vote has occupied its present position for a good many years, but I am just as anxious as any Member of the Committee to improve as far as possible the form of the Estimates, and I will undertake that next year the Votes shall be separated.

Mr. WADDY: Do I understand that the hon. Gentleman agrees to reduce the item to its old amount?

Mr. JACKSON: That is impossible. I daresay my right hon. Friend the Postmaster General will raise an objection to what I have already undertaken.

Mr. DILLON: I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs that this is merely a question of form. An attempt is clearly being made in this case to smuggle through the Committee a large increase in a subsidy to a Steamship Company, under the pretext of suppressing the Slave Trade, when it has been made manifest that the real object of the increase is to facilitate the expansion of the East African Company's trade. The course of the debate has shown clearly what an inconvenient and improper proceeding this is. We have been cut off from discussing the true purpose for which the money is required. We are asked to vote money for a contract which the House has not yet approved; and when we look at the terms of the contract we see plainly that the main motive for the increase of the subsidy is not at all the suppression of the Slave Trade, but is in reality a political motive connected with the present position of Germany and England in Eastern Africa, and also with the development of the trade of the East African Company. We are asked to believe that every subsidy having for its object to increase commerce and communication along the coast must necessarily tend to the suppression of the Slave Trade. I utterly deny that general statement. Before we can judge of the effect of a trade, we must know what the nature of that trade is. Suppose we heard to-morrow that the goods that are shipped by the Company are brought down to the coast on the backs of slaves. I would ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite whether none of these goods are brought down on the backs of slaves?

*Sir L. PELLY: As the question is put to me, I beg to say I believe that nearly all the goods are brought down on the backs of slaves. I hope the Government may see fit to give some sort of subsidy or guarantee to a railway in view to assisting the Company in constructing one, thus tending to supplant this use of slaves.

Mr. DILLON: To use an American expression, I have struck oil. I am exceedingly grateful to the hon. and gallant Member for the frank and manly way in which he has answered the question. It is admitted by a Director of the company that the steamers of the company we are asked to subsidise are engaged in shipping goods that are carried on the backs of slaves; and this is the way in which, according to Members of the Government, we are discouraging the Slave Trade. I protest againt subsidising a company whose profits depend upon this infamous traffic. The attitude of the Government reminds me of the time when a good many Members of this House did not see any harm in the slavery of the Southern States. To put this item vaguely before the Committee as one for the encouragement of commerce on the East Coast of Africa is a preposterous attempt to deceive the public. The hon. and gallant Member hopes the Government will see their way to subsidise a railway. But the non-existence of the railway does not justify English merchants in getting goods carried down on the backs of slaves.

*Sir L. PELLY: The East African Company carry down nothing.

Mr. DILLON: We all know, Mr. Courtney, that the receivers of stolen goods do not steal them.

*Sir L. PELLY: If there are receivers of these goods they are the English community in London and elsewhere who purchase them.

Mr. DILLON: Yes, but the English community in London and elsewhere do not know who brought down these goods.

*Sir L. PELLY: Well, now I tell them.

Mr. DILLON: Let the hon. and gallant Gentleman set up a store in London and placard it "for the sale of goods brought down from the interior of Africa on the backs of slaves," and see how many Englishmen will buy of him. If he will do it I will undertake to boycott the store. I say it is useless to talk of discouraging the Slave Trade when you are deriving a profit from the trade. This discussion has served a most useful purpose. It has shown us that, so far from being a mere matter of form, the introduction of this increased subsidy into the Slave Vote is an attempt to deceive the Committee. Under cover of a Vote for the Suppression of the Slave Trade, we are asked to grant an increased subsidy to a company for the purpose of enabling them to develop the trade of the East African Company, which is a trade based entirely on slave labour. Under these circumstances, I think I am justified in appealing to hon. Members to oppose the subsidy. The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) has offered to alter the Vote next year. I accept no such proposal. This Vote, in my opinion, ought not to be passed on its merits, and the least we can demand is that the Vote shall be postponed until the whole question can be discussed.

MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster): I should like to take your ruling, Mr. Courtney, as to whether I shall be in order in making some reply to the many serious allegations which have been made against the East African Company with regard to the Slave Trade, as I am more or less in a position to answer them.

THE CHAIRMAN: The conduct of the East African Company is not in question. As I am speaking, I may be allowed to make a statement from my knowledge of past transactions respecting the point which has been raised. When I was at the Treasury, long before the establishment of the East African Company, the question of the subsidy came up for consideration. It was then thought it ought to go under the Post Office Vote. The Postmaster General objected very strongly, as it was not an enterprise with which the Post Office had anything to do. The argument was used—whether it was good or bad I do not say—that legitimate commerce was the best way to destroy the Slave Trade.

(6.6.) MR. HANBURY (Preston): I wish to call the attention of the Committee to the mischief we are doing in dealing with the Slave Trade at all. There is no doubt whatever that by the way we have pottered with this question, and by the inefficient manner in which we have endeavoured to suppress the Slave Trade, we have done more harm than good. The miseries of these unfortunate slaves have been enormously increased by the vacillating and half-hearted way in which we have acted. While making preparations for suppressing the Slave Trade, we have done everything to increase it and to add to its horrors. We are now asked to repeat exactly the same error. This line of steamers is carrying the goods brought down to the coast by slaves, and the result of increasing this subsidy will be that the quantity of goods carried by slaves will be increased and we shall have in the future an enormous additional amount of slavery. If we are going to subsidise anything let it be a line into the interior.

*(6.7.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has made a strong point about the immense utility of rapid communication along this coast. When, however, we come to work it out, we find that these steamers are to crawl along the coast at the enormous rate of 10 knots an hour. Yet we are told that they will be of immense assistance in the suppression of the Slave Trade. In reality, all the intelligence will be carried by the swifter German vessels.

(6.9.) MR. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness): I wish to ask you, Mr. Courtney, as a point of order, whether, as two or three hon. Members have shown they are interested in this Vote, it will be competent for them to record their votes?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a matter for them to determine.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): As I protested a good many years ago against British lives being placed in jeopardy by attempting to deal with the Slave Trade in so ineffectual a manner, I cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing concurrence with what has fallen from my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury). I do not wish to raise any objection to the granting of legitimate facilities for communication in these regions; but any grant in that direction ought, I think, to come under the Post Office Vote. I wish to protest once more against the ineffectual manner in which this subject of the suppression of the Slave Trade is dealt with, and against the lives of British sailors being risked in these enterprises.

(6.10.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 145; Noes 213.—(Div. List, No. 59.)

Original Question again proposed.

(6.27.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I suppose it is competent for us, under this Vote, to discuss the conduct of any of Her Majesty's subjects, who may be said to have infringed the spirit of the action which has been taken against slavery. I wish to draw attention to the abuses which are said to have occurred on the East Coast of Africa in connection with compulsory labour.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is quite irrelevant to the subject of the Vote.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I submit that this is a Vote for the suppression of the Slave Trade.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no provision in the Vote for payment of money on the subject to which the hon. Gentleman refers.

(6.29.) MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I wish to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs what steps the Government intend to take to see that the clause in the East African Company's charter respecting discouragement of slavery is carried out?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not relevant.

MR. BUCHANAN: I would point out that in the discussion which has taken place we have had statements bearing on the subject.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question ought not to have been introduced into the debate at all.

(6.30.) DR. TANNER: We find in the Vote an item of £10,000 for the Church Missionary Society; and when we come to examine it we find that it means an allowance of £5 a head to this Society for the maintenance of liberated slaves handed over to the Society by Her Majesty's Consul at Zanzibar. Now, I do not see why the Church Missionary Society in particular should receive this grant any more than the Gospel Propagation Society or any other Philanthropic Association. I do not think we should make any invidious distinction in matters of this kind. My purpose in referring to the subject now is to endeavour to extract some information, and I hope the answer will be a satisfactory assurance that there is no intention to endow with State-aid any one Society more than another engaged in such work. Failing such an assurance, it may be my duty to move a reduction of the Vote.

(6.33.) MR. JACKSON: I think I may relieve the hon. Gentleman from any necessity of moving a reduction on these grounds. No distinction whatever is made between Religious Bodies engaged in Missionary work. The Church Missionary Society have a station at this place, and they are willing to undertake the care of liberated slaves, and to provide for them until some means of livelihood is found. This is found to be the cheapest and readiest means of proceeding, and this grant is for the re-imbursement of the Society for the expense of carrying out its charitable work. This is as regards Zanzibar; but I believe a similar course is pursued in other parts of the world. No distinction is made between Religious Denominations.

(6.34.) DR. TANNER: Then I may take it that these liberated slaves may be apportioned among several Societies, who may share in the grant?

MR. JACKSON: That involves a question of whether they would be willing to enter into an arrangement. We, in the present case, have an arrangement.

(6.35.) DR. TANNER: If a *modus propagandi* has to be adopted, what is the position of Her Majesty's Government? Will the Government undertake to form the religious opinions of a number of people practically spreading the Gospel in a peculiar way, setting up a number of sects in Africa all cordially hating each other, for the love of God? I think it would be better to abolish this Vote to the Church Missionary Society; and if the Society is to carry on its work in foreign lands, as I am sure I hope it will, let that work be supported by voluntary subscriptions. It is a great mistake, I think, to include in a Vote like this an item which may be interpreted in a manner that may give rise to differences of opinion it is well to avoid. I offer no opposition to any Missionary Society, but I do not think there should be even an appearance of invidious distinction in a grant of this kind. Accordingly, I hope that in the future this item may disappear from the Estimates, and that the Church Missionary work will be promoted in the only proper way by private subscriptions, which, considering the wealth of members of the Church, will no doubt be largely provided.

(6.37.) MR. WADDY: I understand that this is not a grant to a Church Society at all; but it is to meet the expenses of the feeding, clothing, and taking care of a number of released African slaves, taking charge of and maintaining them for a length of time until they can be otherwise provided for. Whether the amount of £5 a head is a proper amount is a point we might question; but to the object of the Vote—the maintenance of these poor creatures—I do not think any of us will take exception. "Making them Christians," says an hon. Friend near me. Well, that is not the worst thing that can befal them, and certainly I will not accept that covert sneer. At the same time, I would suggest that there should be thorough impartiality in this respect. Other Societies, I understand, have acted as this Society has; for instance, for many years a Society at Sierra Leone has been so engaged. I hope the grant may be extended to other Societies carrying on elsewhere the same Christian work.

(6.39.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): What is the meaning of maintenance? I imagine these people may be put in the way of earning a living in some way. I can understand the word maintenance as applied to children, or the old blind liberated Africans at Demerara, but I suppose for ordinary adults the maintenance is only temporary?

MR. JACKSON: That is so. Payment is made until they get something to do.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £128,920 (including an additional sum of £30,000), be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, for sundry Colonial Services, including Expenses incurred under 'The Pacific Islanders' Protection Act, 1875,' and certain Charges connected with South Africa."

(6.40.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: May I be allowed to submit to you, Sir, as a point of order, whether it is competent for Her Majesty's Government to depart from precedent, and submit in these Estimates any number of Votes lumped together under one amount, and whether it is open to any Member to move that the Votes should be divided as they formerly were divided? In regard to these Colonial Votes, the practice of combining items has been carried to an excessive extreme, and so in regard also to the Diplomatic and Consular Votes.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member would not be entitled to make such a Motion now. The question is one for a Motion in the House, but not in Committee.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Can I not move that parts of the Vote be considered separately?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can go through the various items, but a Motion for dividing the Votes should be moved on going into Committee.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I do not know whether the Government intend to proceed with the discussion of a new subject now within a few minutes of the time for suspension of business. If the Government desire we should go on, I will proceed with the Motion of which I have given notice, to move a reduction of the Vote by £5,000, under Sub-head B, for the cost of a New Guinea steamer.

MR. WADDY: I rise to order. I wish to ask whether if the hon. Member now proceeds to discuss this item for the New Guinea steamer, that cuts us off from raising questions upon preceding items; for instance, in reference to the steamer at Sierra Leone?

THE CHAIRMAN: If we proceed item by item, the discussion of a subsequent item will preclude returning to a previous item.

MR. WADDY: Then I would now ask for information in respect to the steamer at Sierra Leone.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): There is nothing new arising on the Vote in respect to a steamer at Sierra Leone. It is maintained for the purposes of the Governor of Sierra Leone, and I can afford the hon. and learned Gentleman no other information. It is required for the service of the colony and for purposes for which such a vessel is naturally and properly used.

MR. WADDY: Then it is used for carrying passengers and goods and for purposes to which the Governor may put it?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: It is not a passenger steamer; it is for the use of the Governor. It is necessary he should have a steamer on the coast, where there are numerous inlets and mouths of rivers, which, in the discharge of his duties to the colony, the Governor may desire to visit.

COMMANDER BETHELL (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): As a point of order merely, I would ask you, Sir, whether when you put the Vote just now (which you state that we should be at liberty to go through item by item) if I should have chanced to catch your eye, I should have been entitled to proceed with the South African part of the subject straight away?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; but when an hon. Member has given notice of an Amendment to a particular item, it is convenient, I think, to call on him first.

(6.45.) Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: Now that we have arrived so near the time for closing discussion, I think I can hardly be expected to open a new subject.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

*Sir J. SWINBURNE: May I ask what takes place at 9 o'clock?

Mr. JACKSON: It is intended to proceed with this Vote in Committee of Supply.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee also report Progress; to sit again this day.

KEW AND PETERSHAM VICARAGE BILL.—(No. 229.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(6.47.) Dr. TANNER: I do not like to interfere in the discussion of a Bill with which I have little acquaintance; but it is possible that the Bill deals with a matter of too much importance to be passed over in silence. It has been sometimes the practice to introduce in these brief moments before the suspension of business a Bill to carry out some clerical or other job, and to move a Second Reading by a simple nod. Whenever this occurs and I have the opportunity, I feel it my duty to request some explanation, and I hope an explanation may be forthcoming in this case. It has been suggested to me in an informal way that the Bill is to provide for the division of an overgrown parish into two; but whether that is so or not, I think some explanation is due to us. I feel a natural objection to these Bills of an ecclesiastical character, for, generally speaking, they result in providing a sinecure for somebody. Perhaps at 9 o'clock some Member of the Government will be able to give us an explanation of the Bill.

It being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed this day.

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL—(No. 15.)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND) (OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION) BILL.

(No. 140.)

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Johnston.*)

Dr. TANNER: I object.

*Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I hope the hon. Member will not persist in objecting to a Bill which has been introduced by the hon. Member for Kilkenny, and is designed to do justice to a number of deserving public servants in Ireland, many of whom are Roman Catholics. The Bill has the approval of both sides of the House. It formerly went up to the House of Lords, and was only dropped by inadvertence.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I am informed that there are several points in the Bill that require further time for consideration.

Committee deferred to Monday.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged Mr. Wharton from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, and had appointed in substitution Mr. Tapling.

Sir John Mowbray further reported: That they had added Mr. Lawson to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, in respect of the Bankruptcy Bill.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

(9.0.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

(9.0.) **Mr. PICTON** (Leicester): This evening gives us an opportunity of which we may well avail ourselves, to——

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. PICTON: I wish to bring before the House a grievance which is acutely felt by my constituents, namely, the effects of the Vaccination Laws in relation to the working of the Education Code in Leicester. It is well-known that Leicester has led the way in resisting the law of vaccination, a question on which, as we know, a Royal Commission is sitting. Comparatively few of the inhabitants have been vaccinated, and last year only 101 children or persons in the town underwent the operation. One result is that the School Board of Leicester experience great difficulty in obtaining in the town young persons as pupil teachers who have been vaccinated; and as the Education Department refuse to consent to the engagement of those who cannot produce a certificate of vaccination, the Board have been obliged either to employ incompetent persons or to seek for others beyond the town. I should like to point out the extreme hardship of this. In the first place, the choice of the School Board is unduly limited; and, in the second place, it is most undesirable to have to select candidates whose parents live away from the town. A good deal of strong feeling exists on this matter in the constituency. The question is, have the Education Department any right to insist on the production of certificates of vaccination? The Code does not say that the candidate shall produce such a certificate; it only says that a certificate of health shall be forthcoming. Therefore, I do not think the Department is justified in insisting on having certificates of vaccination. In places where smallpox is rife, such a certificate might be necessary as a preventive, but Leicester is not in that position. For 18 years there has been no epidemic of the kind there, and in such circumstances it is very hard that the Department should forbid the School Board acting in accordance with the convictions of nine-tenths of the inhabitants. All I ask is that an exceptional case should be met by some exceptional leniency and indulgence, and that some consideration should be shown for the views of the population of Leicester. Unless that is done, the School Board will continue to have but a small choice, and they may be driven to cease appointing pupil teachers altogether. I trust that the Vice President of the Committee of Council for Education will give me an intimation that some concession will be made in this matter.

*(9.20.) **Mr. JAMES ELLIS** (Leicestershire, Bosworth): I had no idea that this question would be brought on tonight; but I can assure the House that it is a very important matter, so far as Leicester is concerned. As Chairman of the School Board there, I hold that the young ladies appointed as pupil teachers should have their homes in the town, and I think it is a very serious thing to bring a girl from a long distance and plant her in lodgings. If this rule is enforced by the Department it will certainly end in our ceasing to employ female pupil teachers altogether. Such conduct as this on the part of the Department will only strengthen the opposition to vaccination. Personally, I am not against vaccination; I have had my own children vaccinated, but I am sure you will not gain your end by attempting to force people to have their children vaccinated by public vaccinators. I am very confident also the Department ought not to interfere with the appointments of the Leicester School Board as they are doing.

(9.26.) **Mr. L. P. HAYDEN** (Leitrim, S.): I wish to bring forth a matter, the facts as to which are very brief. It is as to a charge made against Mr. Percy Magan, a Justice of the Peace, of fraud under the Arrears Act, he being accused of having received his full rent from a certain tenant named Power, and of having made a declaration by which he obtained a grant to which he was not entitled. I have asked several questions in reference to this matter, and before Easter I produced a document purporting to show that at the time of the application to the Court the tenant (Bernard Clogher) owed two years' rent, whereas he did not owe one farthing. The Attorney General, in reply at the time, said the person referred to in the document was not the one as to whom my question had reference. But there is only one Bernard Clogher whose rent was £15, and I do not know to whom else the receipt can apply. I want a guarantee that the public money shall not be frittered away on men of the class of Mr. Magan, and I am willing now to lay before the Government further proof of the accuracy of the statement I have made. Of course, if the Government choose, they can screen Mr. Magan, who is one of their strong supporters, a Magistrate, and a member of various Coercive Associations.

*(9.28.) THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The hon. Member has addressed to me several questions in connection with this matter. On the first occasion on which a question was put to me, I made the usual inquiries, and was informed that Mr. Magan, when this charge was first brought against him, wrote to the Lord Chancellor of Ireland requesting that an investigation might be made into the circumstances. The Lord Chancellor declined to order such an inquiry to be instituted on the ground that the matter had occurred in a Department over which he had no control. Mr. Magan then applied to the Land Commissioners, who informed him that while they were quite ready to deal with cases under the Arrears Act, they could not make such an investigation as that for which he asked in the absence of any definite charge. After that the hon. Member sent me a receipt purporting to be for a half-year's rent of a holding by a person of the name of Clogher at a yearly rental of £8 15s, and I promised to inquire into the circumstances of the case. I wrote for and obtained a copy of the affidavits on which the application was founded, and compared it with the receipt; but I found that the two did not correspond, and when it is remembered that the application made to me was that I should direct criminal proceedings in the case because of a wrongful representation as to the amount of rent that was due, I think the House will agree with me that even the most speculative and adventurous Attorney General who ever occupied the position I now have the honour to hold could not for one moment have entertained the idea of a criminal prosecution in such a case as that. The hon. Member now suggests that the £15 a year was a penal rent. I cannot act on a suggestion of the kind. Without further and much more definite information it would be impossible for me to take any further steps in the matter.

(9.31.) COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I desire to call attention to a matter of considerable importance to Ireland. It is a question which vitally affects the interests of the fishermen generally, but especially those on the Western Coast. It is doubtless in the recollection of the Committee that when Her Majesty's present Ministers came into Office they made certain promises in regard to the question of the Irish fisheries and the harbour accommodation round the Irish Coast. They promised to send a Royal Commission to Ireland, and that promise was fulfilled, a Commission of three gentlemen having been appointed for the purpose. That Commission was instructed to make inquiries into three different subjects, two of which I do not intend to refer to, inasmuch as the Government have already taken some steps in the direction to which they relate; but one of those subjects is that to which I am about to refer. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer promised that this particular matter should be thoroughly investigated, and that if the Report of the Commission were favourable to the proposed establishment of fishery harbours on the Irish Coast action would be taken upon the matter. Well, Sir, the Report of that Commission was favourable to the establishment of fishery harbours, and I should like to hear from Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to take any steps in the direction of carrying out the recommendations of the Commissioners, because, unless that is their intention, they will be placing themselves and the House in a false position before the country. Owing to the want of larger and better harbours on the Western Coast great difficulty is experienced in the prosecution of the fishing trade, and the boats which are used by the fishermen are very small and inadequate. If they had better harbours, there is little doubt that they would get larger boats, which are needed to cope with the great waves of the Atlantic, with which the fishermen have to contend in the pursuit of their hazardous calling. Boats of 40 tons would be sufficient for their purpose, and the fishermen would feel safe in navigating them in the Atlantic Ocean. My object in calling the attention of the Government to this matter is that they should feel the necessity of fulfilling the promise they have made on the subject, and should not allow it to be passed over. I am glad to see the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury in his place, and I should like to hear from him that the Government intend to redeem the pledge they have made on this most important subject.

*(9.33.) MR. WEBB (Waterford, W.): The subject to which my hon. and gallant Friend has just called attention is one in which the constituency I have the honour to represent is deeply interested. I cannot but regard the question he has raised as one of especial importance to inhabitants of the western portion of Ireland. This harbour question has been before the Irish public for a very long period, and although the Government have always been ready to make promises upon the subject, they have not been so ready to fulfil them. If the desire of the Government is to allay the discontent which undoubtedly prevails, and to concede necessary and just reform, I can hardly imagine any question which is more worthy of their attention than that of the construction of harbours on the South and West Coasts of Ireland. A few years ago my attention was especially directed to the want of harbours on the Coast of Donegal. I happened to be for a time on Tory Island, and, owing to the stress of weather, found it absolutely impossible to get back to the mainland coast, on reaching which I could have reached home by train in the course of some few hours. The consequence was that we had to take a steamer which conveyed us round the coast to Liverpool, whence we had to proceed to Holyhead and so cross to Dublin by steamer. I only mention this as an illustration of the want of harbours on the Western Coast. The people along that coast use a very imperfect class of boats, those known as coracles,

which are of insufficient size and construction, and which, in bad weather the people were unable to use at all. If they had better harbours, doubtless they would have a better description of boats, and would be enabled to prosecute their fishing enterprise under much more favourable circumstances than at present.

(9.35.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Before the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury answers the questions put to him by my hon. Friend, I desire to call attention to another matter which, I think, is germane to the question of Supply. I refer to the way in which two most important Votes have been lumped together by the Government, the result being to cause extreme confusion in the discussion of the subjects to which they severally relate. I refer especially to the case of the Votes of the Diplomatic and Consular Service as one of enormous importance, embracing the whole of the relations of the British Empire with the rest of the world, and the same observation may be made with regard to the Consular Vote, which affects the commercial relations of this country with every part of the globe. These two important subjects have hitherto constituted separate Votes, but the Government have thought fit, contrary to precedent, and without consulting the House upon the subject, to put the two Votes together, and they also propose to take the Colonial and South African Vote in the same way as one proposal. I may remind the House that last year a pledge was given by the Government that the Diplomatic and Consular Votes should be brought before the House in an earlier period in the Session than hitherto, so that there might be better opportunity of discussing the subjects to which they relate. The Government have fulfilled that promise to the ear, but I very much doubt whether they have fulfilled it to the hope, because they were put down for the day immediately preceding the recent holidays. Everybody knows that it is unusual to bring forward important Votes immediately before and after the holidays. The Government, when questioned upon the subject, refused to inform us what they were going to put down for discussion on the days nearest to the holiday recess.

They said we should see their proposals on the Papers. Of course, hon Members might see the Papers if they chose to give up a portion of their holiday, but I did not see the Papers, and I understand that the late Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs went away under the impression that the Diplomatic and Consular Votes were not to be taken until the House should have a fair opportunity of considering them. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary shakes his head. I suppose he means by that that no such pledge was given. But, at any rate, that was the understanding on the part of the late Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and the result was that many hon. Members who would have liked to bring forward important subjects connected with those Votes, were deprived of their opportunity of discussing those matters. The consequence was, that the Diplomatic and Consular Votes, having been lumped together in the way I have described, were brought before an empty and languid House the first day before the holidays without notice having been given to hon. Members that they were to be so taken. The result was anything but a happy one, either for the House or for the Government, because the questions arising upon these Votes were only half discussed, and the hour arrived at which it was necessary to suspend the discussion. The Government have to-day followed a most deviating and uncertain course in regard to the proceedings in Supply. There was no definite intimation this morning that Supply would be taken. The whole Civil Service Estimates were put down with the hope, I suppose, of running them through. I do not think this is a fair way of treating the House. Then Members who were interested in the Allotments Bill complained that it was sprung upon them in an unfair way, and it was postponed. The result was that if a discussion had not arisen on the question of Electoral Liabilities, the chances are that many of us who are interested in colonial questions would have found the Votes on which we wished to speak passed. This evening we find that the Movers of Amendments have run away, and consequently the Government are trying to get into Committee of Supply. One would have thought that the colonies might have had a Vote to themselves, and that the great subject of Africa might also have had a Vote. Her Majesty's Government have, however, thought fit to lump together the Colonies and South Africa, and I very much doubt whether we shall have the opportunity of discussing the subjects we wish to raise. If we do discuss them we shall all have the terror of the Closure hanging over us. The lumping of these Votes together is really an abuse of the power of the Government, and is not fair treatment.

*(10.7.) SIR T. ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.): I quite agree with the hon. Member as to the extraordinary way in which the Government have jockeyed the Committee in connection with these Votes, and more especially with regard to the Consular and Diplomatic Service Vote. I will take this opportunity of drawing attention to the condition of a people in whom perhaps the British public do not take a very great interest just now—the people of Samoa. I think the condition at which Samoan affairs have arrived gives me a good right to ask Her Majesty's Government what is the policy of this country in relation to the Samoan Islands. The idea in Samoa to-day is that the British Government and the British officials in Samoa are determined to back up the policy of Germany in that part of the world. It is believed that the British officials in Samoa and all over the South Pacific have received instructions from home to do nothing except what the Representatives of the German Empire desire to be done. I do not know whether hon. Members remember what took place not so very long ago in Samoa, and led to the appointment of the Commission which has recently terminated its labours with about the same amount of success as generally seems to attend the labours of such august bodies. It is the old story of land-grabbing—that extraordinary craze for robbing weaker people which seems nowadays to have received an additional impetus in Europe, and which seems to prevail with particular vigour in connection with the foreign policy of the German Empire. The Germans went to Samoa some years ago. They began, I believe, by carrying out missionaries to the natives, and they

finished by robbing the people of their land. That is the general result from the importation of civilisation in these countries, and the Germans succeed in this as well as other people have succeeded. They robbed the Samoans of the land, obtaining it from the chiefs under all sorts of frivolous and ridiculous pretexts. The chiefs gave these German gentry the right to cultivate the land, and the Germans looked upon that as giving them the fee-simple, which the chiefs, as a matter of fact, had no right to give. The Germans occupied the land and commenced to establish a hard-and-fast system of despotism, and, in the end, the natives found themselves driven in desperation to take up arms against the "German Colonists," as they called themselves, but as they really were, invaders. They came to hostilities, and Mataafa, one of the chiefs, defeated the Germans—these great German soldiers had to turn tail from native warriors armed only with old guns and primitive spears. After their victory the natives acted with their usual kindliness, and instead of exterminating the colonists allowed them to live there quietly. Their reward was the sending of a German fleet to shell their villages, but then the Americans intervened. The natives relied on the protection of England, but the English, of course, did not want to interfere with the Germans' little game, and would not give the natives any assistance. However, as I say, the Americans came to the assistance of the people of Samoa, and things were peacefully righted, greatly to the credit of the United States. What I should like to know from Her Majesty's Government is, What is the policy they intend to pursue in regard to the Samoan Islands—what instructions have they given to the High Commissioner in the Western Pacific, and what instructions the British Consul in the Samoan Islands has received? Are your Representatives in that part of the world to follow the dictates of the German Government—because it seems to me to be generally admitted nowadays that England has to play second fiddle to the Germans. From my general study of the Samoan question, I think the interests of humanity requires that England, if she plays second fiddle to anybody in Samoa, should play second fiddle to the Americans, and not the Germans. The people of this country are very anxious to put slavery down in Africa, and perhaps the House will be surprised to learn that at this very moment there exists in Samoa quite as evil a system of slavery—though perhaps not on so large a scale—as anything to be found in Africa. On one island there are no fewer than 4,000 slaves, and I believe that on the other islands, where there are large cocoanut plantations, there are also large numbers of slaves. Now, we have voted money to put down slavery in Africa, and I should very much like to know whether Her Majesty's Government have given support to the Germans in their slave-owning operations in Samoa. In the Southern Pacific there are schooners carrying the German flag going to the different islands, inducing the natives to go on board, and, then, on various pretexts and with the connivance of the chiefs, putting the natives in the hold and sailing away with them to the plantations to work as slaves. I have been on board these slave schooners, and have seen where the slaves are manacled, and kept in chains until landed at the plantations. It is monstrous that, for some political or diplomatic reason, this country should shut its eyes to a condition of things so bad as this in the South Sea Islands, when it is perfectly able to prevent it—or, at any rate, to alleviate the condition of these kidnapped natives. I am not particularly interested just now in the extension of the British Empire, but though, while the present condition of things prevailing between England and Ireland exists, I am no Imperialist and certainly no jingo, I must say I think it would be preferable to have the Samoans under the protectorship of England than under that of Germany. The natives hate the Germans, and the treatment they have received from the Germans justifies their dislike. Most of the natives would be quite ready and willing to be protected by the British flag, and it is for Her Majesty's Government to consider whether their secret or open obligations towards the German Government will allow them to interfere to prevent the system of land grabbing that is going on all over the Southern and Western

Pacific by the Germans. In Australia there is growing up a very strong feeling indeed against this German encroachment, and if the Germans are allowed to continue in their present course, it will end in a state of feeling in Australia and New Zealand which will certainly not conduce to the welfare of the British Empire in this part of the world. If I were an Englishman I would certainly urge Her Majesty's Government to consult the wishes of the colonists in these matters, and to take measures to prevent the Germans from occupying these islands, seeing that the Australians and New Zealanders regard such an occupation as a standing menace to their progress and development. This is, perhaps, not the time to make any appeal to right hon. Gentlemen opposite to protect the Samoans against the treatment to which they have been subjected by the Germans. But I do think that even from an ordinary feeling of humanity the House ought to express a desire that an end should be put to this system of slavery and persecution in the Southern Pacific which I have described.

(10.15.) Mr. JACKSON: The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan) raised a very interesting question in which I know he takes considerable interest, and he was supported in his observations by the hon. Member for Waterford (Mr. A. Webb). All I wish to say on the general question of harbours is this, that so far as I can judge of them, from my own personal observations and from what I have read in the papers, a considerable amount of that which has been expended in this direction in the past has not been wisely expended. It is, however, well to bear in mind that on this matter, the Board of Works and those who have been responsible for deciding what work should be done have been proceeding by steps. Though fishing by the use of large boats is impracticable in many instances where those small piers have been built because of inaccessibility at certain states of tide, at the same time it is well to remember that these small piers do answer for ordinary purposes. The money, therefore, has not been entirely thrown away. So far as I can judge, if fishing is to be carried on successfully in this part of Ireland, it can only be by large boats; for these access must be given to the harbours. I was much gratified to find in what a workmanlike manner the fishing industry is carried on at those places where facilities have been given for the use of large boats, and I should be much more hopeful of the future of this industry at such points than at the points to which reference has been made. As the House knows, there is to be a large expenditure on railways in Ireland, and such an expenditure is a preliminary to the improvements of the fishing industry, as there has always been a want of means to carry the fish caught to market. The Government are endeavouring to deal with that want, and I think it would be desirable to wait and see the effect of connecting the existing harbours with inland districts by direct lines of rail before extending the system of harbours. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy emptied the vials of his wrath on the Government for having made certain changes in the Estimates this year, and he complained that the opportunities for discussing the Votes have been contracted. Well, I confess the impression left in my mind by the hon. Member's speech was, that whilst he complained of want of opportunity, there was nothing more distasteful to him than to take the opportunities when they came. To-night the House has had an opportunity of discussing the Estimates, and yet the hon. Baronet does not seem to care to avail himself of it.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I am quite ready.

Mr. JACKSON: I am glad of that, because the Government has been waiting for some time; and I, therefore, appeal to the House that we may now be allowed to go into Committee of Supply, and really make some substantial progress.

*Captain VERNEY: I beg to call attention to a grievance from which the inhabitants of the Isle of Anglesey suffer. There is an old Act of Edward VI. which prevents the holding of Quarter Sessions in any town in Anglesey except the ancient town of Beaumaris. Great inconvenience is the result. The County Council and the Quarter Sessions have unanimously appealed to the Government for assistance in placing Anglesey on the same footing as other counties in regard to Quarter Sessions, to enable the Home Office to name some other town for Quarter Sessions if thought desirable. The Grand Jury have, again and again, unanimously requested that this old Act, the reading of which would throw the House into fits of laughter, may be repealed, and the county would experience great satisfaction if the First Lord of the Treasury would give us an assurance that, if the hon. Member for Anglesey brings in a Bill to repeal this ridiculous old Act, the Government would offer no opposition, but give facilities for its passing.

(10.1.) DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I am very astonished my hon. Friend (Sir T. Esmonde) has received no reply upon the important question he brought before the House. In past times we have protected you from the encroachments of other Powers. We hear a good deal about the integrity of the Empire, but it would appear, from the silence of the Government to-night, that even now we, the Irish Members, have more care for the integrity of the British Empire than you yourselves, I am bound to say that if you would only settle our little difficulties in Ireland we are prepared, even at the eleventh hour, to protect you from Germany and such other powers. But I have a little grievance left, and I regret very much that the learned Attorney General for Ireland is not in his place, because I would like him to assist me in putting an end to an abominable outrage that has been committed in Ireland, in the name of the law, upon dumb animals, who have no power to protect themselves. In times gone by we heard about outrages which were committed in Ireland by foolish and misguided men upon the tails of animals. I am going to bring before the House the question of an outrage which has been committed, and which is being committed in Ireland every day, under the very noses of the police, upon the heads of animals. The other day the Attorney General for Ireland told me that the hideous operation which is called dishorning of cattle is illegal in England, that someone was prosecuted before the High Court of Ireland, and that the operation was also proved to be illegal in Ireland. Some other Court has decided in another case that the operation is not, after all, illegal, and the Attorney General said he has given instructions to the police to bring another case into Court in order that the matter may be decided. If the Attorney General had taken me into his confidence I could have taken him to a place half-a-mile from a police station in Ireland where he could find the mangled skulls of 160 cattle. Apparently the police have told the right hon. and learned Gentleman that they cannot find a case in the whole of Ireland to bring before the Courts. It is thought by many that the operation of dishorning beasts is simply cutting off the horns. It is nothing of the kind. I determined to be present at an operation, and some time ago I was present. I saw a two year old bullock tied up by head, tail, and legs, and held down by six men. Three of the men, who had previous to the operation been cleaning out a cesspool, and who looked like men who would have had no fear in going to the lower regions if they had had one or two more glasses of whisky—they had had three or four glasses of whisky before the operation—recoiled from their operation, left the operator in the lurch, and went back to their work, which no one will admit is pleasant work. The unfortunate animal's howls were like the howls which are said to proceed from a place which I will not describe. It wriggled in every muscle, and the two men who remained demanded that the operator should cease, in what one of them described as his bloody work. I will one day place in the library the horns that were taken from this unfortunate animal, and I think any hon. Member who will examine them will satisfy himself that, although cattle were given to us for our use, they were not given to us to torture them. I think any hon. Member who has a particle of humanity in his heart will join me in demanding that the Law Officers of the Crown in Ireland shall instruct their police to desist, at least for a time, from political operations, and take a walk into the country lanes, where they will find hundreds of animals being tortured in the way I have described.

MR. WADDY: There is a matter which I am very anxious to take this opportunity of mentioning. Next year we are to have a Census, and it has been suggested that we should repeat the experiment which was made for the last time in the year 1851, when a Religious Census was taken. It seems to me impossible to get from the Government any definite statement of their views on the matter. I know well what are the arguments *pro* and *con* as to a Religious Census, and anyone who has studied the Report made in 1851 by Mr. Horace Mann will admit that a more judicial paper than that it would perhaps be difficult, if not impossible, to draw up. I do not propose to argue the question of the desirability or undesirability of taking a Religious Census: my anxiety, and the anxiety of many people in the country, at present, is to know whether the Government propose to take any such Census or not, and if it is so proposed to know what is the mode to be adopted. There are two modes in which a Religious Census may be taken. It is suggested, on the one hand, that the proper course would be simply to go round to people's houses, and at the time that you take down the names and addresses, ages, sexes, and so forth, take down the people's own statement of what they themselves believe, if they believe anything. To that there is a strong objection. Assuming, for a moment, that a Religious Census is desirable, as to which I express no opinion, we should endeavour first to ascertain the relative strength of the different religious denominations, and what, in my opinion, is far more important, the strength of the whole combined. It is notorious that there are at this moment in the country a large number of persons who do not in reality profess to have any religion at all. No doubt, if we went to such people they would say they belong to the Church. In Ireland such people would probably say they belonged to the Catholic Church, and in Scotland they would most likely say they belonged to the Church which is the Established Church for all practical purposes of that country. But we do not care for the purpose of ascertaining the truth what people choose to call themselves in order to get rid of the question when put by an investigator. The question, if it is to be settled at all, should be settled on the principle of ascertaining what the people are, and not merely what they say they are. I, therefore, wish to point out to the Government that there is only one way in which we can arrive at an approximate result. I do not say that even by it we shall arrive at the truth, because we never can tell whether a man's professions are hypocrisy or truth; but the system adopted in 1851 was that of ascertaining how many persons really do attend at the churches, chapels, or meeting-houses of the various denominations throughout the land. The result of that system was to ascertain, at all events, those who not merely had the desire to call themselves something, but the number of those who had attached themselves to some definite form of worship. If a Religious Census is to be taken, it is of the greatest importance that it should be taken on the principle and in the manner adopted in 1851. I know very well what was the argument used when results appeared which had not been expected. One right rev. prelate said that the result had been an unfair one in regard to one particular church, because the Sunday was wet. How far that affected the peculiar religious views of one church more than another I am not able to say, but I think we may take it for granted that rain is as potent a liquifier for one denomination as for another, and they must all take their chance. If you were to take the Census in the way I first mentioned it would simply be a delusive and misleading operation. If, on the other hand, you take it in the way I advocate, I do not say it will be accurate, because you never can get it accurate, but it will, at all events, represent the true state of facts with regard to the number of persons who are worshippers at particular places of worship throughout the land. I have endeavoured to avoid saying one word which would appear to be of a party or sectarian spirit, and I would most earnestly urge on Her Majesty's Government that they should not allow this operation to be made the means of misleading the country with regard to the actual total number of persons professing to belong to any particular church or denomination; and that they should not allow themselves in any way to be made the instruments af any partisan feeling which may lead to the misrepresentation of the strength of one Church to the disparagement of any other.

*(10.53.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: In answer to the remarks of the hon. and gallant Member for North Bucks, I invite him to present the Bill to which he has referred to the consideration of the House when it will certainly receive the res-

pectful consideration of the Government. As to the observation of the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Waddy), I assure him that I am entirely ignorant of the intentions which have been ascribed to the Government in relation to the Census. A Bill dealing with the question, will, however, be presented to the consideration of the House, and it will be for the House itself to determine on what principle the Census will be taken. There is no desire on the part of the Government to take any unfair advantage of any religious body. I would now make another appeal to hon. Members to allow the Government to proceed to business. The House is aware that progress is required with the Estimates. We are most anxious to make progress with Supply, and we had every reason to believe that we might do so this evening.

*(10.55.) MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I am very sorry I cannot yield to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, but there is one matter which I wish to bring under the attention of the Government, and which I cannot refer to on the Estimates. We, in Scotland, are constantly complaining that we have no access to the Secretary for Scotland, but I hope my appeal will not fall on dull years, so long as the First Lord of the Treasury is in his place. Last year, when we were discussing Local Government in Scotland, we directed the attention of the Government to the exceptional condition of land tenure in the North East of Scotland in regard to fishermen's dwellings. Her Majesty's Government then undertook that the matter should receive their consideration this Session, though they were unable to say that anything would be done this Session. I am hopeful, however, now that such great progress has been made with the general business of the House, that some opportunity may be given for the discussion of the question. The right hon. Gentleman the Lord Advocate, in reply to a question I recently addressed to him, said he was unable to make any statement with regard to a certain case which is *sub judice*; but I think there can be no objection to my calling attention to that case as an illustration. It is one in which a fisherman has built, on the ordinary tenure on the North-East coast, property to the value of £280. The tenure is extremely doubtful, and it has been held generally, I think, in the Scotch Courts that the ground landlord is entitled to turn out the occupier at his pleasure by giving an intimation of ejectment. An intimation of ejectment has been given in the case of this poor man, and, as far as we can see at present, he will be deprived of his property. I only call attention to the case as an illustration; but I may say that we cannot be responsible for what will occur if ejectments of this kind take place. The Government have given us to understand that the question of the tenure of fishermen's dwellings will be dealt with, and there is a rapidly extending feeling that these people are being neglected. If ejectments take place, it will probably be necessary to send gunboats. The people are beginning to think that without an agitation they will get no relief. I hope that now that I have again had the opportunity of bringing this matter forward, a matter which is indeed of pressing importance, that it will receive some attention at the hands of Her Majesty's Government. I have felt it my duty to bring the matter forward even though to the delay of business, with which the Government are anxious to proceed; and I think the nature of the grievance, in which hundreds of industrious, quiet, law-abiding men are concerned, justifies me in availing myself of this opportunity.

(11.0.) THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The hon. Member has referred to one particular case which he has also pressed upon my attention within the last few weeks, and as to which I then informed him that I considered myself precluded from making reply while judicial proceedings were going on. I am not aware that the bar against present discussion has been removed by any judicial decision, and, accordingly, I abstain from any discussion of that particular case. The hon. Member has said that there are a number of occupiers on the North-East coast of Scotland who ought to have a more fixed tenure than they at present possess; and my impression on this subject may be expressed in a very few words, and will absolve the Government from any further undertaking in the matter. I agree with the hon. Member in thinking that it is most desirable that the fishermen resident on the North-East coast of Scotland should have as permanent a tenure of their holdings as is consistent with existing engagements on their part. The hon. Member suggests that legislation is necessary; but that I doubt, according to the information I at present possess. I find, on investigation into circumstances that have been referred to by the hon. Member and others, that upon a number of the larger properties on the North-East coast of Scotland, where fishermen are resident in large numbers, opportunities have been offered to the tenants by proprietors for obtaining titles of permanence, either by long leases or by feus which are of a most complete character. The hon. Member demurs to that statement; but I must adhere to it in regard to some of the large estates ——

*MR. ESSLEMONT: Some.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Yes, some. We must take things by steps. Hon. Members must accept that method of argumentation. On some of the large estates where these opportunities were offered there was not that alacrity to take long titles which might have been expected from the representations made.

*MR. ESSLEMONT: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to say that I agree with him to this extent; that although on some of the properties this opportunity has been given, these fishermen have invariably said that the conditions laid down by the proprietors who offered these opportunities were such as they found impossible to accept. But even if the right hon. Gentleman were right and some offers were made, why should these men, tied to a particular harbour by the nature of their employment, be compelled to have no tenure at all or take the inequitable conditions proposed to them?

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I will leave to the judgment of the House whether this is a proper interruption—interposing with an argument in the midst of my reply to the speech the hon. Gentleman has made. The hon. Gentleman assumes in his interpellation that the conditions were inequitable, but I say they were not. We are at variance, but I shall be prepared to make good my contention in a discussion of these proposals. I challenge the hon. Gentleman to point out one of the conditions having the character he ascribes to them. Accordingly, I say his case must fail; there is no case for legislative interference, so long as the offers of permanent title, unaccompanied by inequitable conditions, were made to these fishermen who declined to avail themselves of such offers. But I do not dwell upon that and for this reason: I think it is desirable both in the interests of landlords and tenants that there should be a title, and I hope that a conference in a more amicable spirit than is suggested by a Parliamentary discussion of the present nature may take place, and that some terms may be arranged between landlord and tenant. I am not aware that any attempt has been made to discuss the matter on that footing, and I rather think too much alacrity has been shown to change the venue to Westminster, and to treat this as a Parliamentary matter, unaccompained by that information as to local requirements and local opinion which ought to be the foundation of any application to Parliament. I do not wish to treat the matter in any arbitrary or imperative sense. I recognise the desirableness of removing the difficulty; but it is more a matter for amicable solution than Parliamentary debate. Nor do I think we advance matters much by continuing a discussion brought on in this impromptu way. The hon. Member has referred to some other topics in relation to harbours, upon which I do not feel called upon to reply, as they do not concern the Department for which I am specially responsible.

(11.8.) MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I do not think the First Lord has any just cause for complaint if Members take up time on this a Friday night, which is usually devoted to subjects in which private Members are interested. By a mere accident those Members who have notices on the Paper are not ready to bring them forward, and so the time is not occupied in the usual way. We are not, however, taking up Government time, but private Members' time. There is a subject which, I think, is of more interest than any other set down for any Tuesday or Friday discussion, which I will take the opportunity to mention, though I would not do so if I had an assurance that Class

VII. of the Civil Service Estimates would be reached within the next fortnight. There is a special reason for referring to the Western Highlands and Islands Commission. It is a matter which was referred to in the Queen's Speech, and is of very considerable importance to the Western Highlands.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is the subject of a Motion, notice of which is on the Paper for Committee. The hon. Member cannot bring it on now.

*(11.10.) MR. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH rose in his place and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

(11.10.) The House divided:—Ayes 115; Noes 60.—(Div. List, No. 60.)

Question put accordingly.

(11.20.) The House divided:—Ayes 129; Noes 61.—(Div. List, No. 61.)

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £128,920 (including an additional sum of £30,000), be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for sundry Colonial Services, including expenses incurred under 'The Pacific Islanders' Protection Act. 1875,' and certain Charges connected with South Africa."

(11.30.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I must say I doubt the expediency of the First Lord of the Treasury closuring us at half-past 11 on a private Members' night. I am, however, ready and willing to go on with this Vote. I desire to move a reduction of £5,000. This Vote is the result of an agreement between the Government and Queensland with regard to New Guinea, and I object altogether to the arrangement by which New Guinea is placed under the administration of Queensland. It has been annexed under pressure from Queensland; but, having been annexed, it ought to be administered by the Home Government, and we ought not to allow ourselves to be used as a catspaw to enable Queensland to carry on certain industries there. The Queensland Government, in a rough and overbearing manner, insisted on the annexation of New Guinea. I remember an eloquent passage in a speech by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, in which he denounced the handing over of the population to a Colonial Administration, yet that is what we are now doing. In 1885, after the death of Sir Peter Scratchley, the Government did not appoint an independent administrator. They selected a gentleman whose conduct has since been condemned by the Queensland Government. This gentleman proclaimed that British New Guinea, being an appanage of Australia, was destined ultimately for the white race. That meant, of course, that the natives are to be turned out to make room for the whites. In the last Blue Book (page 629) we are told that Sir Anthony Musgrave stated that the incursion into New Guinea of prospectors for gold had been unwisely encouraged under the *régime* of the late Commissioner. I admit that the Government have now appointed a better qualified administrator. Sir W. Macgregor, who is perhaps more fitted to be an explorer and naturalist than an administrator, is, at any rate, a fair and honest man. But his administration is altogether starved, the sum set apart for it being very inadequate. This is the result of the contemptible bargain made by the Government with Queensland. For £15,000 a year, guaranteed by the colony for the cost of administration, New Guinea is made subject to Queensland. Sir W. Macgregor found it impossible to keep out of New Guinea prospectors and settlers, and I am afraid he has been obliged to punish the natives for offences which the white people have provoked by their unjustifiable acts. I deliberately say that Queensland ought not to be intrusted with the control of dark races. I am sorry the Member for East Mayo is not present. Only yesterday he denounced the usage to which the dark races have been subject during the last few years. In the Blue Book there is ample proof that many of the people of New Guinea have been kidnapped and unfairly treated. According to the Report of the private secretary of the late Sir Peter Scratchley, the offences committed by the blacks are attributable to the direct and aggressive provocation of the whites. The latest Blue Book that has been issued on this question contains an official Report which is dated 1887, and states that the hostilities that have occurred in New Guinea have been provoked by the white man himself, and that every native in the service of the white man has been either kidnapped or has been entrapped into the service by false statements. I am free to admit that measures have now been taken to put a stop to this objectionable traffic. But we have the most conclusive evidence that in the years 1885, 1886, and 1887, an unjustifiable traffic was being carried on by the people of Queensland against the people of New Guinea. I believe the traffic will be put an end to altogether in the year 1891, and that already a great improvement of affairs has been secured. It was our own Special Commissioner who said that, directly or indirectly, provocation has come from our side. As we have been induced to annex New Guinea we are responsible for the protection of the natives against injustice from our own colonists. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £5,000, which is our contribution towards this New Guinea steamer.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item B, £5,000 (New Guinea Steamer) be omitted from the Vote."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

*(12.1.) Baron H. de WORMS: Sir, I think the Committee will agree with me that the hon. Member who has just addressed the House at such length has not urged any reason at all for the reduction of the Vote which he has just moved. The hon. Gentleman went into a very long, and, if I may be allowed to say so, a somewhat discursive and irrelevant argument as to what happened in New Guinea some years back; but as the hon. Gentleman is dealing with the Administration of New Guinea at the present time, logically, I think, he ought to have made out a case against the present Administration.

(12.2.) Sir G. CAMPBELL: I quoted from the latest Blue Books presented to Parliament.

*(12.3.) Baron H. de WORMS: The hon. Gentleman, in his rhetorical efforts, showed that he had not thoroughly mastered the details of the case, for he spoke of the action taken against a civilised population.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Comparatively civilised.

*(12.4.) Baron H. de WORMS: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that a very large proportion of the natives are cannibals? Of course, if the hon. Gentleman entertains the view that cannibals are comparatively civilised, all I can say is, it is a view with which I cannot agree. Under the administration of Her Majesty's Government the natives are becoming civilised; and here I must enter a protest, on behalf of Queensland, against the extreme and unwarranted attack made by the hon. Member upon the colonists, not for the first time. The hon. Member proposes that we should break deliberately the contract which we entered into with the colonists on the occasion of the Colonial Conference three years ago. At that Conference Her Majesty's Government gave a pledge to provide a steamer for the New Guinea Government, and also £3,500 a year with respect to it. If the hon. Member objects to this sum of £5,000 on the ground that New Guinea is being badly administered he is misinformed. It is not badly administered, and never has been so well administered as now; it is impossible to have a better and more able Administrator than Sir William Macgregor. If the hon. Member objects on financial grounds he shows that he has not mastered the subject. The original estimate was £18,500, and only £15,132 has been expended, so that the sum of £3,368 has been saved on the purchase money, and in three years only £4,500 will have been spent on maintenance more than was contemplated. I do not see what possible ground the hon. Member has for urging the reduction of this Vote. He has not made one specific charge, but has contented himself with reading extracts, dating from 1886 and 1887, out of the Blue Book. With regard to the present administration of the island the hon. Member is not able to put his finger upon one blot. Nor is the hon. Member quite correct with regard to the administration of the island. He wished the Committee to suppose that the administration rested entirely with Queensland. That is not the fact. Under the existing administration, dating from July, 1888,

the Administrator reports to the Governor of Queensland on the general question of administration, but the appointment and dismissal of the Administrator rests solely with Her Majesty's Government, and if the Administrator had been inefficient, or guilty of cruelty to the natives, Her Majesty's Government would immediately have dismissed or suspended him.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Was Sir John Douglas dismissed?

*Baron H. de WORMS: That was before New Guinea was taken over. With regard to the protection of the natives that is specially provided for. If the hon. Member had looked at the Letters Patent he would have seen that their protection is specially mentioned in Sections 12 and 13. I maintain that the hon. Member has not made out the shadow of a case for the reduction of the Vote.

(12.10.) Mr. A. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): Sir, I now move to report Progress, and I make the Motion because I think, without being unreasonable, we have a right to make this protest. This is the only occasion, probably, we shall have for a very long time of bringing forward grievances, and I think it unreasonable that the Government have not allowed us to have our talk out to-night. I do not wish to put it higher than that; but there are grounds for putting it very much higher. Mr. Courtney, we all know that with the conduct of the business of this House, there is a good deal of talk. [*Ministerial cheers.*] It is all very well to—I was going to say jeer, but to cheer. In the conduct of the business of the House, however, there must be forbearance, and it is not unreasonable that, on an occasion like this, Her Majesty's Government should be expected to forbear from preventing the discussion of public grievances. I do think we ought to protest against being shut up in the way we have been shut up to-night. I myself, in consequence of an answer given by the Postmaster General, felt it my duty to give notice that I would take the first opportunity of asking the House to affirm the undoubted right of the Civil servants to discuss their grievances, free from official intimidation or interference. Though I will do my best, the probability is I shall never have a chance of bringing that Motion forward, and to-night is probably the only opportunity I could have had of doing what I believe to be my duty. That is an illustration of the reason why we ought to protest against the way in which the Government determined, at 11 o'clock, to go into Committee. I do protest against the unreasonable way in which these discussions have been stopped by the Government.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. A. J. Williams.*)

(12.12.) Mr. JACKSON: With great deference to the hon. Gentleman, I think he will see on reflection that he ought not to press his Motion. The grievances to which references have been made have been long known, and if they are so urgent how is it that not a single notice is put down on the Paper with regard to any one of them? The grievance to which the hon. Member refers is one which can be discussed on one of the Votes which is down on the Paper for to-night. The opportunity he wishes is not, therefore, lost to him.

*(12.13.) Mr. PICTON: I think the hon. Gentleman is scarcely fair to the hon. Member. There were two notices of Motion on the Paper, and it was quite inconceivable that any further Motions could be discussed. Their disappearance was quite unexpected by all, but it gave us an opportunity, rightly and properly, to bring forward grievances that had failed to obtain a place on the Paper. I challenge the Government to bring forward any precedent for the course that has been pursued to-night. Was ever a case known in which the Government have closured debate on private Members' night? I am sure no such precedent exists, and I am sure we ought to take every means of resisting the innovations on private Members' nights. Why, this is called a Conservative Government, but, so far as this House is concerned, it is the most Revolutionary Government that ever sat on that Bench. There is no tradition of this House sacred to it; none of the liberties of private Members are respected; all it cares to do is to turn

the House into a sort of bureau to record its decisions. It may bring the House to such a sad and degraded condition that we shall not be able to recognise the historical Parliament of which we desire to be Members. I think I have another reason for concurring in this Motion. I think the constituency which I have the honour to represent was treated with considerable discourtesy this evening. As the Representative of 160,000 people, and supported by the Chairman of the School Board, I brought forward a grievance, which, whatever hon. Gentlemen opposite may think of it, is felt very acutely and painfully by the people of my constituency. About the personal aspect of such a slight, I do not care at all, but certainly the constituency which I represent does not deserve it, and I think that a constituency of its size and importance ought not to be treated in such a manner. I consider that I was perfectly justified in bringing forward on their account what to them was a serious grievance, and I protest against the matter being treated so slightingly and scornfully. It is mainly out of regard for the traditions and liberties of this House that I enter into this protest, and express my earnest hope that the matter will be pressed to its uttermost issue.

*(12.16.) MR. W. A. MCARTHUR (Cornwall, Mid, St. Austell): I do not think it matters very much whether we agree to report Progress or not, but I may say that I recollect having put a question to the First Lord of the Treasury with regard to the time the Vote was to be taken this Session, and the First Lord then promised that it should be brought forward in sufficient time for its careful consideration. It is quite impossible that there can be adequate discussion on this Vote to-night, and the Government can hardly expect that a question of so much importance as the Colonial Vote can be fairly considered within the limits of three-quarters of an hour. Unless the First Lord is determined upon applying the Closure to this question, I trust he will see the desirability of at once postponing the further consideration of this matter.

*(12.17.) MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I am bound to say that in the course of my experience I do not remember an occasion on which a Vote of so much importance as this has been persisted in by the Government at a quarter past 12 o'clock at night on a Friday, against the wish of a large number of Members that opportunity should be given for its further and fuller consideration. In fact, it is a most unusual thing for the Government to propose to take Effective Supply at a late hour on a Friday night, when it is well known a large number of hon. Members have gone away. I hope, therefore, Her Majesty's Government will see the propriety of not persisting in the discussion of this Vote at the present moment.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: In answer to the observations of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I fully admit that it would not be reasonable on our part to press the House to dispose of the Colonial Vote this evening, but I think that, inasmuch as the hon. Baronet the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) has moved the reduction of the Vote, it is desirable that we dispose of that Motion, and when it is disposed of the Government will assent to the postponement of the Vote.

(12.19.) MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I have only one observation to make, and it is this: I think the hon. Gentleman who has moved to report Progress has every reason to make the complaint he has put before the Committee; but I would point out that in making that complaint the hon. Member was treated with very scant courtesy by Her Majesty's Government. In fact, he was absolutely jeered at by those sitting upon the front Bench. I think that when questions of this kind are raised here the very last persons to sneer at and jeer hon. Members who are endeavouring to point out what they regard as real grievances should be the Ministers of the Crown. When right hon. Gentlemen occupying such a position condescend to take this course I think they show, if I may be permitted to use the expression, exceedingly bad taste. They ought rather to invite than to discountenance discussion. At any rate, if they ought not to invite it they certainly ought not to object to it. I think there is every reason for the Motion which has been made to report Progress. Hon. Members on this side of the House have a right, I think, to complain that the speeches they have made on questions of considerable importance have not received the slightest reply from Ministers of the Crown. My hon. Friend behind me made a very important speech in reference to the administration of affairs belonging to a very important Department of the Government, and no answer whatever has been vouchsafed to the serious charges he has made against those who are in charge of that Department. Other speeches from this side of the House have similarly failed to elicit the least reply from Ministers who are responsible. Under these circumstances, I think it quite right that a strong protest should be made by hon. Members on this side of the House against the course pursued by the Government, especially when we consider they have adopted the unprecedented course of moving the Colonial Vote under the circumstances which have already been the subject of so much comment. The action of the Government involves an undue interference with the rights of private Members, and we cannot therefore allow it to pass without our strenuous protests. On these grounds I shall support the Motion that you, Sir, do report Progress.

(12.25.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 59; Noes 122.—(Div. List, No. 62).

Question again proposed, "That Item B, £5,000 (New Guinea Steamer), be omitted from the Vote."

*(12.32.) MR. W. A. McARTHUR: I regret that on this occasion it is my unhappy fate to have to disagree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy; but I am bound to say I find it difficult to understand why that hon. Gentleman apparently can never make a speech in this House on Colonial topics, especially on Australia, without making a most unjust attack upon those entrusted by Her Majesty's Government with high offices of Administration.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I may be allowed to say that I have never attacked the Administration of any of our Colonies, except that of Queensland; and the Administration of Queensland, I admit, I have attacked strongly.

*MR. W. A. McARTHUR: I am in the recollection of the Committee when I say that the hon. Gentleman to-night attacked, by name, three gentlemen who have been concerned in the Administration of New Guinea; and, I say, that to make attacks of this kind without notice, and without there being a shred of proof of the allegations on which they are founded, is a course which is not fair to gentlemen who undertake the administration of tropical Colonies under circumstances of difficulty, and it is not a course which will commend itself to the judgment of Englishmen.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: To what three gentlemen does the hon. Member refer? I spoke in the highest terms of the three Administrators of New Guinea.

*MR. W. A. McARTHUR: I propose to make a speech, and not to conduct a catechism. I am bound to say I fail to see what connection there is between the question of the general condition of the labour traffic in the Pacific and the Vote for a steamer for New Guinea. But since the hon. Member has attacked the Administration of Queensland as to the labour traffic and its conduct of affairs in New Guinea, I may be allowed to say that the period at which this colony purged itself from the evils of which he complains was not so recent as he imagines. Queensland was not purged by outside influence, but she purged herself as soon as the evils were made known. The cruelties referred to did not take place in Queensland itself, but they occurred upon the labour vessels. When I was at Brisbane, four or five years ago, I saw the report of an investigation into the whole subject. Drastic legislation was then proposed, and it has been since passed, and the perpetrators of cruelties have been punished, and the labourers themselves seem cheerful and contented. It is a matter for congratulation rather than complaint that white settlers and prospectors have gone to New Guinea, and I wish them good luck. The manner in which New Guinea has been annexed is a natural expansion of the British Empire by colonists, who feel that the acquisition of this territory is necessary to themselves and to prevent its being fortified against us.

(12.40.) SIR G. CAMPBELL [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I would ask the House to allow me a word or two in reply. [*Continued cries of* "Divide!"] Give me fair play. Surely it is but decent to allow me to reply. As to what has fallen from the Under Secretary for the Colonies, I must say I was astonished to hear him accuse me of quoting ancient history, seeing that every word I quoted was from the very latest information the Government have vouchsafed to us on the subject of New Guinea. It may be that the Blue Book has not been brought up to date, as it ought to have been, but that is not my fault.

*BARON H DE WORMS: It deals with the period before the annexation.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I have endeavoured to master all the information given to me. I have done my very utmost to bring this matter up to date, and it can hardly be made a matter of complaint against me that I have given facts which are the most recent facts communicated to us by Her Majesty's Government. I am glad to find my hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall (Mr. McArthur) in accord with me as regards facts; but I think he cannot have listened to my speech, or he certainly would not have accused me of attacking the characters of three successive Administrators. I had nothing but the highest praise for these gentlemen. I did attack Mr. Douglas; but I did so on the authority of Sir A. Musgrave, the Governor of Queensland. As regards what has been said by the Under Secretary, I maintain that, for all practical purposes, the administration of New Guinea is made over to Queensland. The right hon. Gentleman says there are cannibals in the island, in answer to my statement that the mass of the population of New Guinea are comparatively civilised. I could occupy the attention of the House for a long time in reading extracts from the Blue Book to prove my assertion. No doubt there are some uncivilised people there. There are certainly people in Scotland and Ireland living in hovels, and in a condition approaching to savagery; but I do not think a Minister in any foreign country would be justified in saying on that account that Great Britain is uncivilised. The hon. Member for Cornwall admits that atrocities have been committed, but says that drastic legislation has now been adopted to put a stop to them. I admitted that. It astonishes me to hear the hon. Member talk about New Guinea being a place for the ultimate overflow of the population of Queensland, a very large part of which is not inhabited at all. It may be that the British Isles require an overflow which the Australian Colonies are not prepared to give them; but to say that Queensland requires a place for the overflow of her population, is a doctrine that I am content to leave to the judgment of the House. I am free to admit that I have put down this Motion for a reduction in respect of the New Guinea steamer, not because I desire to put down the steamer, but to afford an opportunity for protesting against the doctrines maintained by the hon. Member for Cornwall—who, be it observed, is connected with the Colonies.

*(12.52.) SIR T. ESMONDE: We have heard some theories about New Guinea, and we have heard what the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy has to say, and what my hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall has to say. I think there is another version of the matter. Perhaps the House is not aware that the whole of New Guinea has not been annexed. We have annexed a part, and the Germans have annexed the other part. The Australian Colonies got their views as to annexation carried out by the Home Government, because of their objection to have a powerful and armed neighbour next door to them. It would have been possible—if Her Majesty's Government had had the sense to see it—to allow Queensland to annex New Guinea. It would not have cost this country a penny. We should not then have had to send Sir William Macgregor out, and it would not have been necessary to spend this £5,000 on a steamer. The natives of New Guinea are not so civilised as the inhabitants of some other islands near, though, no doubt, they have some very estimable qualities. It is said that they are in process of being civilised—that the Papuans are a sort of semi-civilised cannibals. Some say that they are giving up their cannibalistic practices; but that is hardly borne out by a story I heard not long ago of a German Professor, who was fond of going into the interior of New Guinea for the purpose of collecting

flies and beetles, and so on. On one occasion he went out and never returned. An expedition was sent out by the German Government to discover him, but they heard no tidings of him, until one day a native told them he could take them to a place where they would learn something about him. He accordingly conducted them to some inland place where there was a temple and some gods. They discovered one magnificent god, painted all sorts of colours, and exceedingly beautiful, according to native ideas; and on the end of this god's nose were a pair of blue goggles, which had belonged to the missing Professor. That was all that remained of the celebrated scientist, and that may be taken as an evidence of the civilisation of the place.

Mr. Aird rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but the Chairman withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

*Sir T. ESMONDE: These are the people that Sir W. Macgregor is endeavouring to civilise. Sir William has made some wonderful journeys into the interior of the country, has made some fine surveys, and given some very graphic accounts of his performances; but I am bound to say I do not think New Guinea worthy of the attention of this country. There are other people to whom it would be of more importance, and who would be prepared to subsidise this steamer if the territory were handed over to them. The best policy to adopt would be to hand the island over to Queensland. Let Queensland send over a Governor or Chief Commissioner, and then the First Lord of the Treasury, or whoever represents the Treasury on a Vote of this kind, will not have cause to complain, for nothing will be asked from the Home Government. Whatever expense we have been put to hitherto on account of this island has been due to the extraordinary policy Her Majesty's Government has pursued in making their action subservient to that of Germany. A great mistake was made in not establishing a British protectorate over the island, and in allowing the German Empire to annex part of it.

Sir T. Esmonde

(1.0.) Mr. Aird rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Question be now put."

House cleared for a Division.

Dr. TANNER: Mr. Courtney, I beg to call your attention to the fact that when the Closure was moved it was 1 o'clock. The First Lord of the Treasury, as usual, made a mistake.

The CHAIRMAN named Dr. Tanner and Mr. Sheehy as Tellers for the "Noes."

Members, with the exception of the Government Tellers and Dr. Tanner, having gone into the Lobbies, the Chairman, addressing Dr. Tanner, asked: Where is the other Teller?

Dr. TANNER: He's in Limerick. You named Mr. Sheehy.

The CHAIRMAN asked Mr. Akers-Douglas, one of the Government Tellers, to obtain another Teller for the "Noes." Mr. Akers-Douglas left the House, but presently returned, and made a communication to the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Serjeant, will you bring a Member out of the "No" Lobby to tell?

The Serjeant-at-Arms went to the "No" Lobby and returned with Mr. Waddy.

Dr. TANNER: Mr. Waddy is in custody, Sir.

The Division was then proceeded with.

The Numbers were:—Ayes, 120; Noes 46.—(Div. List, No. 63.)

Question, "That Item B, £5,000 (New Guinea Steamer), be omitted from the Vote," put accordingly, and negatived.

It being after One of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

It being ten minutes after One of the clock, Mr. Deputy Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at ten minutes after One o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 28th April, 1890.

NEW PEER.

Sir William Ventris Field, Knight, late one of the Judges of the High Court of Justice, having been created Baron Field, of Bakeham, in the County of Surrey—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS BILL.—(No. 52.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Viscount Cross): My Lords, it is not my intention in asking your Lordships to give a Second Reading to the Industrial Schools Bill to take up much of your time, because it was introduced last year, and was then referred to the General Committee on Law. That Committee made certain alterations in the Bill, and the measure which I have now the honour of asking your Lordships to read a second time is for all practical purposes the same Bill as that which came down from that Committee. There are in it one or two alterations which it is perhaps only fair that I should name to your Lordships. In the 3rd sub-section of Clause 10 an addition has been made, so that the Court may require the parent of a child alleged to have been found under any of the circumstances mentioned to produce the child before the Court. The provisions for the due observance of a child's religion have been slightly strengthened, as it has been thought wiser that that should be done; and there is also a provision with regard to the emigration of children, requiring that certain securities shall be taken before the child is emigrated. The chief alteration is in Clause 25, imposing the obligation upon counties and boroughs to contribute to the schools. That provision which was struck out by the Committee last year has been re-introduced. It has been thought much better that that should be made compulsory upon the Local Authorities, who will get the contributions which would otherwise have gone to the Treasury, and which the Treasury is prepared to give up. Then the present measure charges upon the Police Authorities instead of on the County Councils the expense of conveying children to the industrial schools and of their removal from one industrial school to another. It also enables the Secretary of State, as well as the President of the Local Government Board, to appoint boarding-out schools, and takes away from the County Councils the power of contributing to truant schools. Further, the School Boards are no longer required to obtain the permission of the Secretary of State. The alterations which have been made are very simple, and I do not think I should be justified in taking up more of your Lordships' time in moving the Second Reading of the Bill.

*Lord NORTON: I will ask your Lordships to be kind enough to allow me to make a few observations with regard to this and the other two Bills affecting reformatory schools and juvenile offenders, for they really stand together and form one piece of legislation. It is a subject to which I have devoted time and care for now nearly half a century, and I think I may claim some credit for experience and knowledge of the question, having myself drafted the first Act, besides having since conducted through Parliament other measures dealing with it, and also having founded institutions under their provisions. The noble Viscount has said that these Bills are much the same as those which were introduced last year. But those Bills were subjected to very little debate except in Standing Committee, although your Lordships will allow that they proposed a very material improvement in the existing law. These Bills are partly for the purpose of consolidating of the existing law and partly of amending it. The Amendments make a clearer distinction between the education and the police treatment of these children; secondly, they deal with the ages of the children to be received into these schools; and, thirdly, they make a very material improvement by placing in a separate Bill the penal portions of the existing Acts. I only desire that the spirit of these Amendments should be fully carried out. I only want these schools to be entirely schools, and that care should be taken to separate the punishment of such children as fall into crime from the education of their whole childhood afterwards. Where necessary to be inflicted punishment should be separate from the education to be given them, for the purpose of getting the children out as soon as possible to earn their own livelihood. The alterations which would carry out this view are chiefly matters of mere phraseology, yet they would, in their effect, be of the greatest importance. Instead of sentencing or committing children to these schools for detention for long periods, many of them being merely homeless or the victims of bad company, they should be put under the care of (or apprenticed if you like) to the industrial schoolmasters, and kept in the schools, not for terms of years, but simply until the master shall report that they are qualified to go out to work, and that proper work is ready for them. Children of more serious or hardened criminality should be differently treated, and with more serious punishment. But those are a very small minority, and not at all in the description of this Industrial Schools Bill. None under this Bill have been convicted of any offence; and they are chiefly chargeable with being homeless and guardianless, The object of the State must, therefore, be to provide them with that education and care, the want of which has led them into criminal associations. What seems to be obvious in this matter is the extremely suicidal policy of the State *in loco parentis* connecting these schools with the Police Department, and the penal character given to the education of the children whom they want to rescue from all taint of crime, The most singular reasons are given for maintaining the prison phraseology of these Acts. A Minister said to me the other day, "How is it possible to treat these children differently, because they are under sentence and are committed for detention?" Would it not be more sensible to change that phraseology, and not sacrifice to it the great object in view? In the debate upon these Bills last Session it was said that these children having from neglect got into evil and degraded habits required a special kind of education. What is the speciality? Simply that it is more industrial. There is no other difference whatever from the education given in our national schools, and singularly enough, this speciality is the very thing which it is now considered desirable to introduce into those schools. Others say, again, that these schools must be corrective. All education is corrective, and these schools being correctional from evil habits does not make them cease to be educational, but only a special kind of schools, placing them in a category of national education by themselves. People should consider the mischief done by placing these institutions under the Prison Department. In the Royal Commission, of which I was a member, we devoted two years not only to the investigation of the subject in London, but to travelling through the three Kingdoms in a thorough inspection. The Report of the Commissioners shows how imperfectly public opinion has advanced from the time when we treated criminal and outcast children as responsible adults; yet although the evidence led to taking a wider view of the subject, it only succeeded to draw them half-way, and it was proposed that these schools should be submitted for inspection half in the Education Department and half in the Police Department But I observe that in the Bills now before your Lordships this particular recommendation of the Committee has not been adopted, no doubt because it is clear that the schools should be under one Department or the other, and not under two Departments; for it is quite obvious that a dual superintendence must be fraught with difficulty. On that ground the recommendation of dual treatment for these schools has been omitted from this Bill, and the schools are left wholly under the Police Department. Your Lordships will say, if there is no practical mischief done to schools by prison discipline, it does not much matter what the terms of the enactments are? Is there no practical mischief arising from education being described and treated as imprisonment? In the first place, it bars to a great extent the very employments for which these children have been trained at great cost to the public. These Bills to a great extent propose to diminish this evil, and to open the Army and apprenticeships to trades to these children; but, still, as far as a actual penal character is given to these schools, it makes the inmates feel that they are stigmatised and classed as criminals, many of them having no more criminality about them than any of your Lordships would have if brought up in the same way when young. They feel conscious that in public opinion they are classed as criminals, just as children brought up in pauper schools have been degraded in their own and others' estimation by being classed as paupers. The day industrial schools are actually acknowledged as national elementary schools, and that goes a great way towards admitting my argument. There must, of course, be a certain difference in the mode of treating utterly neglected children, but essentially they will be educationally the same. It is rather a curious thing that the Education Department are, by the 4th clause of this Bill, empowered to make arrangements with industrial schools. So that, my Lords, we are very slowly getting into an acknowledgment of right principles in this matter. There has been a very great abuse from indiscriminate use of industrial schools, especially in Scotland and Ireland, as shown in the Report of the Commissioners, and an enormous waste of Treasury support, so great that it would be almost better to abolish them than to allow them to go on under present conditions. The alterations which I shall try to introduce into these Bills when they go into Committee are, first, to check the multiplication of various kinds of schools. With regard to truant schools I shall propose to strike out the whole of those clauses from this Bill. What on earth are truant schools? The term suggests a punishment, not an institution. What is the equivalent of the Truant School at Eton? The birch. The Bill does propose to modify this grotesque imposture of truant schools, and to a certain extent they are to be maintained, but I shall protest against more of them being provided for. I should prefer to abolish them altogether; there are only six. I shall, secondly, try also to get the Committee to alter the prison phraseology. There is a very great improvement in this Bill in one respect, and that is, by introducing a better mode of enforcing payment by parents against their shameful relief of themselves from the cost of supporting their children. It is said that the children would be of use to the parents, and to that extent the parents suffer; but to the extent to which parents are relieved of their obligations there is great mischief by encouraging neglect, and by promoting pauperism in too easy an access to industrial schools. I am glad to see that this Bill proposes to make Local Authorities liable for the cost of the children's maintenance, leaving them to recover that cost from the parents. If any parents are thought too poor to pay anything, it may be pointed out that the children must have cost them something to maintain at home. Where a child who has incurred a punishment has a decent home, he should, after being punished, be sent to it, and not to an industrial school. The law will then compel him to attend a national school. By the operation of the present process of penal detention, children are kept at school to an age far beyond that at which they should go out to work. A large number of youths of 18 to 21 are kept at these schools injuring the younger scholars, and growing unfit for work themselves. They are being spoiled for work. The 20th clause for apprenticing to trades, and otherwise disposing of children at an earlier age, and with regard to enlistment in the Army, will, to some extent, neutralise that mischief, and the encouragement of emigration, which is the best of all treatment in many cases. I beg pardon of your Lordships for having trespassed so long upon your time; but I do think I have called your attention to points of importance. The separate Bill for penal treatment, alternatives for prison, and the removal of discretion in magistrates as to prison treatment of children are improvements of the Bills of last year. It is to be hoped that County Councils will ake up the subject.

*Lord MONKSWELL: My Lords, I do not propose to follow the noble Lord opposite in his criticisms on these Bills. I think they are excellent measures, and the only object I have in rising is to urge Her Majesty's Government to take a little more interest than they do in this subject. For that purpose I propose to say a few words on the urgency and importance of these measures, and also upon the dilatoriness, to which I desire the attention of the House, of Her Majesty's Government in regard to them. I am sorry to say that I believe the apathy of Her Majesty's Government is shared to a great extent by the public at large, though I do not think that is due to any want of heart, but simply to ignorance of the subject. I believe the public are perfectly well aware, and no doubt the Government are aware, that these schools are carrying on a great work; but I doubt whether Her Majesty's Government realise the very serious and grievous obstacles which are placed by the present law in the way of the managers and officials of those schools in carrying out the duties entrusted to them; and I do not think the country knows or realises how very serious and deplorable is the result of those obstacles which are placed in the way of the industrial training given in those schools. Still, the public are tender-hearted towards children. In the last Session an Act of Parliament was passed by universal consent for the better protection of children, who are now protected almost as well as the law can protect them against the infliction of violence, brutality, and starvation upon them by unnatural parents. But children are not protected against other forms of cruelty, which inflict even more lasting harm upon them than blows and starvation. Under the present law it is the case that at the age of 16 a parent can claim his child from an industrial school, even though he is to the last degree vicious and depraved, even though he has himself compelled the child to commit the offence for which he was sent to the school, and even though he has not paid one penny towards the expense of that child's maintenance while he was in the school. This Bill, my Lords, raises very much the same question as was raised in your Lordships' House last Friday, namely, that of parental control—the right of a parent to compel his daughter to go upon the streets, and to compel his son to associate with thieves and vagabonds. Now, I know something of the subject which I am speaking about. I am Chairman of the Committee of Management of the largest industrial school in the Kingdom; and I am constantly being importuned by the excellent superintendent of that school, and rightly importuned, to use my position as a legislator to do all I can to call public attention to the grave scandal of parents being able to claim their children at that early age, and to do everything in my power to obtain an alteration of the law as soon as possible. It is positively heart-breaking to that superintendent to have to bring up before the Committee of Management, to be given up—as he very often has—a promising, bright boy of 16, who is extremely anxious to enter upon a new life and break with his past—a boy who for years has been well taught and kindly cared for, who is responsive to kindness, and who is anxious to avail himself of one of the numerous situations open to him in which he might earn an honest livelihood either in this country or the colonies. But the boy has been claimed by a vicious parent, and, according to the law as it at present stands, that is recognised as a good and valid claim. He is claimed by, and given up, to a parent who, I maintain, in spite of what I understand to be the opinion of some noble and learned Lords to the contrary, has forfeited every shred of right that he may once have had to the respect and obedience of that child. The boy or, worse still, a girl it may be, is entrusted to the charge of such a parent, whose only object in getting back his child is that he may take its earnings to enable him to lead a dissolute, idle, and drunken life. I venture to say that any child must, to pass scatheless and uncontaminated through such a terrible ordeal as that, have very unusual strength of character, and a moral courage which is seldom found at so early an age. My Lords, this is no new thing. We find it is done, not in defiance of law, but under the authority and in the name of the law. The evil has been denounced over and over again, and the law has been denounced by the Commission on which the noble Lord opposite sat. That Commission denounced the evil in the strongest possible terms, and proposed to remedy it by an alteration in the law which these Bills will carry into effect. I am glad to find that this matter was taken up at a very early stage of its labours by the London County Council. On the 20th May last year that Council passed a resolution urging upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of altering the law with regard to these schools without delay. My Lords, I am sorry to have felt obliged to trouble the House with these observations, but I think the extremely deliberate proceedings of Her Majesty's Government in this matter afford me a sufficient excuse for having done so. On the backs of these Bills I notice the statement that they were ordered to be printed on the 28th March, 1890; and if they were then printed, there has been an absolutely inexcusable delay of six weeks. Why could not the Government have had these Bills drafted during the Recess, and have at once laid them before the House? If they had done so, the Bills might already have passed through the hands of the Legal Committee, which has had ample opportunity of dealing with them, because, on two occasions, the Committee has not sat, because it has had no work whatever to do. It is not as if they were in any way a novel piece of legislation. As the noble Viscount has said, they were introduced last year, and one of them passed through the Legal Committee, while the other, which had 13 clauses, passed in Committee. I shall be told by the noble Viscount, I suppose, that there is plenty of time for these Bills to be passed into law. So there is if the Government is anxious about it, but I confess I have my doubts; for last year I observe that that the Reformatory Schools Bill was ordered to be printed on April 2nd; it did not reach the Legal Committee until July 16th, and then it was immediately withdrawn. On the back of these Bills, as I have said, there is a statement to the effect that they were ordered to be printed on the 28th March. Nobody knows better than the noble Viscount that it was a mere farce to order them to be printed by that date, inasmuch as the drafts of them were not then completed. They were not, in fact, drafted until the 21st of April, although the noble Viscount had promised that they should be introduced, of course, fully drafted, into this House before Easter. My Lords, I have thought it right, on behalf of the managers and officials of industrial schools, to offer these remarks, and to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the great necessity of carrying these Bills through Parliament as quickly as possible, and without the least unnecessary delay. These measures are not heroic or sensational; they are not demanded by large and angry meetings of people in Hyde Park; but I venture to think they will do a great deal more good than many Bills which combine all these conditions.

*Viscount CROSS: I will only say in answer to what has fallen from the noble Lord opposite, that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to pass these Bills during the present Session, if it be possible to do so. He complains that they were not printed and actually introduced before the Easter Recess. They were drafted, and in order when I first introduced them, with the exception of one or two little difficulties which remained to be settled, I venture to assure my noble Friend that these Bills will pass this House long before the other House will be able to deal with them. Our difficulties are not in this, but in the other House. I can assure the noble Lord that it is the intention of the Government that these Bills should pass if we can get them through. With regard to what has fallen from the noble Lord Norton, I will say that no one can deplore more than I do the abuses in connection with these schools. Hundreds of children are sent to them who ought not to be sent there. I am afraid I cannot agree with him in doing away with truant schools; I think that they are of great advantage. Seven years' experience at the Home Office has led me to believe that it is a wise thing that these industrial and reformatory schools should be kept under that Department.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c.

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS BILL.

(No. 58.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*Viscount CROSS: My Lords, this Bill is in exactly the same form as it was last year, except that its provisions have been made somewhat more like those of the Industrial Schools Bill in one or two of the clauses.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS BILL.—(No. 54.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*Viscount CROSS: My Lords, it has been thought that the penal clauses which existed in these Acts should be brought before Parliament in a separate Bill. That was the general feeling last year, and it has now been done. I ask your Lordships to allow the Bill to be read a second time.

Lord HERSCHELL: I will just say a few words upon this measure. I think the Bill will require some attention, because it strikes me that although it may be quite reasonable to empower a Court of Summary Jurisdiction in certain cases to impose a fine upon the parent, or to order the parent to pay to any person injured by his child a sum in compensation not exceeding £5, I think that some intimation ought to be given in the Bill that that provision is only to apply to parents or persons who have some control over the child. There is no definition here of what meaning the word "parent" is to have; and though that would be a very reasonable proviso where a parent has control over the child—and its neglected condition may properly be supposed to be attributable to him, and good grounds would exist, therefore, for imposing a penalty upon him—it would be unreasonable where the child was altogether out of the parent's control. Therefore, in some way the application of the word "parent" will have to be defined in order to show that the parent must have a control over the child. For example, this Bill will apply to girls under 16 years of age; and girls at that age are often entirely beyond their parent's control, or even married. We know that is not so uncommon a case that it ought to be overlooked. Then there is another point which will have to be regarded. I am not quite sure whether, as the Bill is drawn, it is intended to apply, and would apply, to cases where whipping may already be inflicted by a Court of Summary Jurisdiction under the Act of 1879. Under that Act, where an indictable offence has been committed, if the parent consents to its being dealt with at once without going to a jury, the Court may order the child to be whipped. I do not think this Bill covers those cases, because it only applies to offences punishable by the Court; and I doubt whether that is the same thing as indictable offences, which are dealt with under the former Act. Again, under that Act the limit of whipping is six strokes; but under this Act, if the child is over 12, the punishment may be increased to 12 strokes. Obviously it would never do to allow 12 strokes to be inflicted in cases of non-indictable offences, while six strokes is the limit of whipping for indictable offences.

*Viscount CROSS: I will take care that those two points are brought before the notice of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department. I do not know whether my noble Friend thinks this Bill would apply to the parents of an adopted child.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c.

PRESENTATION TO BENEFICES BILL (No. 58.)

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL BILL. (No. 12.)

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 59.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without amendment; and to be read 3ª To-morrow.

METROPOLITAN HOSPITALS, &c.

Lord SANDHURST: My Lords, the Motion which I have to propose this evening is really nothing more than a formal one. I mentioned to your Lordships last year the reasons which caused me to bring the matter forward, and since then the proposal has been agreed to by Her Majesty's Government. I should, however, like to mention one point in connection with the subject. It has been mentioned in various quarters that I am actuated by a spirit of hostility to the great hospitals in London, and I only wish to contradict that by saying that I and those with whom I am acting approach this subject in no spirit of hostility at all. Knowing how great are the straits that many of these institutions are in, we wish to lay bare the facts, and so strengthen the position of those most worthy establishments, and we suggest that under the best advice some practical organisation should be formed, whose action and co-operation may render these great charitable institutions more useful than at present.

Moved,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire with regard to all hospitals and provident and other public dispensaries and charitable institutions within the Metropolitan area for the care and treatment of the sick poor which possess real property or invested personal property, in the nature of endowment, of a permanent or temporary nature; and to receive, if the Committee think fit, evidence tendered by the authorities of voluntary institutions for like purposes, or with their consent, in relation to such institutions: And further, to inquire and report what amount of accommodation for the sick is provided by rate, and as to the management thereof; and that the witnesses before the said Select Committee be examined on oath; agreed to."—(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

Then the Lords following were named of the Committee:—

L. Abp. Canterbury.
E. Cadogan (*L. Privy Seal*).
E. Winchilsea and Nottingham.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Spencer.
E. Cathcart.
E. Kimberley.
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Clifford of Chudleigh.
L. Sandhurst.
L. Fermanagh (*E. Erne*).
L. Lamington.
L. Sudley (*E. Arran*).
L. Monkswell.
L. Thring.

The Committee to meet on Thursday next, at Three o'clock, and to appoint their own Chairman.

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^{a}; and to be printed. (No. 63.)

House adjourned at a quarter past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 28th April, 1890

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table; and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON STREETS (STRAND IMPROVEMENT) BILL (*by Order.*)

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [17th April], "That Mr. Ambrose be one other Member of the Select Committee of London Streets (Strand Improvement) Bill."—(*Mr. Baumann.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

*(3.3.) MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): As this Motion stands in my name I hope the House will permit me to make a few remarks. I consider, whether rightly or wrongly, that this matter is essentially a Metropolitan question, although it is true that the principle of betterment which is involved in the Bill, if adopted in this instance, may be applied in other parts of the country. I therefore thought myself justified in submitting the names of two Metropolitan Members out of the three to be nominated from this side of the House. I submitted my own name, because it is usual for the Member who moves for a Committee to serve on it himself; and I submitted the name of the noble Lord because he represents a large and important Metropolitan constituency, and he informs me that he is prepared to attend the Committee with a perfectly impartial mind. I must say that the suggestion that we should erase the name of the noble Lord for the purpose of substituting that of the hon. Member

for Battersea (Mr. O. V. Morgan) is somewhat cool, seeing that the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), who is already committed to the principle of betterment, has already been nominated, and that it is proposed to nominate also the hon. Member for West St. Pancras (Mr. H. Lawson), who is a member of the London County Council. No doubt the hon. Member for Harrow (Mr. Ambrose), whose name is now before the House, has expressed an opinion unfavourable to the principle of betterment; but the noble Lord the Member for Brixton is absolutely unpledged in the matter, and has formed no conclusion in regard to it. The hon. Member for North St. Pancras objected the other day to the noble Lord and myself, on account of age and weight; but the fact is, old and heavy men do not abound in the representation of the Metropolis. With the exception of the Members for the City, the Members of the Government, the Member for the University, and the Member for Greenwich, all we London Members were born in 1885. So far as the hon. Member for Battersea is concerned, I do not think that the services of a juster or more impartial man could be obtained; but the result of substituting his name for that of the noble Lord the Member for Brixton would be to secure upon the Committee a majority from the opposite side of the House. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock) proposes to add the names of Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson and Sir J. Pease, and I hope that both of those hon. Members are old enough and heavy enough to satisfy the wishes of the hon. Member for North St. Pancras. I certainly shall not question their specific gravity. If the hon. Member persists in his Motion, I shall certainly divide the House against it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Marquess of Carmarthen be one other Member of the said Committee."—(*Mr. Baumann.*)

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I am sorry that the debate should have taken a personal turn. So far as I am concerned, I have never intended to do anything that would give the noble Marquess the Member for Brixton the slightest annoyance, but if I had wanted a reason for the Amendment I am about to propose, I think the hon. Member opposite has afforded it to me by the amount of personality he has introduced into the discussion. I never said one word in regard either to age or weight.

*Mr. BAUMANN: I beg to correct the hon. Member. On the last occasion he deprecated the selection of the noble Lord both on account of his inexperience in this House and his youth.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: Probably I did contrast the short experience of the noble Lord with the judgment, Parliamentary position, and experience and authority in this House, of the hon. Member for Battersea, but I am not aware that I referred to their weight or age. I must say that I consider it in the highest degree necessary that we should appoint upon this Committee Members of experience and authority to consider a most important Bill which deals with a large question of taxation, and finance affecting this great city and the other large cities and towns. It is most desirable that we should have men who have not expressed strong opinions one way or the other, and who would carry into the Committee no prejudice against the County Council promoting the Bill, or against the principle of betterment which the Bill embodies. The hon. Gentleman, a short time ago, made an intemperate speech with reference to the County Council, and spoke of teaching the County Council "a lesson."

*Mr. BAUMANN: I never said so.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: The hon. Gentleman has forgotten what he said. When the hon. Gentleman rises to lecture others he should, at all events, remember his own shortcomings. I do not wish to say anything personally of the noble Marquess; but I think that the hon. Member for Battersea would be a better man for the Committee, and I therefore propose the substitution of his name.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Amendment will be taken upon the question whether the noble Marquess shall be a member of the Committee.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I am opposed to the principle of betterment in any form, and I am of opinion that the question of the improvement of London should be considered from a broader standpoint. The fact is that the London County Council have not the means at present of knowing how they are to raise the funds for carrying out the vast improvements they contemplate, and I trust that the result of the inquiry of the Committee we are about to appoint will be to enable the County Council to see the difficulty of the course they propose to take, and to induce them to substitute for that which is inequitable in their proposal some other system.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: I rise to order. The question is not the principle of the Bill, but the nomination of the Committee.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is nothing irregular in the remarks of the hon. Member.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER: I was only pointing out the difficulty of carrying out this system of taxing London for improvements in the future. I do not deny that the hon. Member for Battersea possesses certain advantages. He has sat in the House continuously since 1885, and he has the advantage in point of age; but the question is one of a broader and more comprehensive character, and I believe that the noble Marquess has had considerable experience in connection with Local Government in various parts of the country, and that he will prove as useful a Member of the Committee as the hon. Member for Battersea. The matter is not one of detail but of principle, and as I think that the Committee will be strengthened by the addition of the noble Marquess, I support his nomination.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I support the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for North St. Pancras, because I wish to see all Parties properly and fairly represented on this Committee. What we want is that there should be an equal representation, and that we should have a Committee who will show no prejudice in regard to the question of betterment. It is, therefore, that I welcome the proposal to appoint the two hon. Baronets, the Member for Essex (Sir H. Selwin Ibbetson) and the Member for Barnard Castle (Sir J. Pease). Our desire on this side of the House is that the question should go before a Committee who will frankly and fairly discuss it.

Mr. ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): This is a matter which seriously affects the East-end of London, and I am sorry to find that my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham has not proposed the nomination of some of the East-end Representatives. The people of the East-end feel greatly the great increase of taxation imposed upon them by the London County Council, and they feel that the time has arrived when hon. Members should interest themselves in getting that taxation reduced. I shall be compelled to object to my noble Friend the Member for Brixton, who does not represent an East-end division, and for the same reason I object to the name of the hon. Member for Battersea.

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): This is a most important question, and one which vitally affects the interests of the inhabitants of the Metropolis. The Committee is the most important Committee which the House has been called upon to appoint during the present Session. There are 4,000,000 of people in this Metropolis.

An hon. Member: More nearly 5,000,000.

*Mr. CREMER: That only strengthens my argument, and shows the necessity of devoting due time and deliberation to the constitution of the Committee. If the Committee is constituted as proposed by the hon. Member for Peckham, the result will be a foregone conclusion; but although the question may be staved off for a time, it will be absolutely necessary to re-open it hereafter. Another objection to the names submitted is the absence of any Representative from the poorest districts of the Metropolis, and if no Representative of the East End constituencies are to be appointed, I claim for the hon. Member for Battersea that he is a man of much greater experience than the noble Lord the Member for Brixton. He has been longer in the House; is a man of greater business qualifications; a man of impartial judgment, and one than whom no better Representative could be desired. But besides this, the noble Marquess belongs to a section of Society which has an interest in preserving the present state of things. The position which he occupies and the class to which he belongs, warrant us in concluding that he would go into the inquiry with some degree of prejudice. That remark does not apply to the hon. Member for Battersea, who would go into the inquiry with a spirit of complete impartiality, and not likely to be hampered by any consideration for vested interests.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): There was one remark made by the hon. Member who has just sat down to which I must draw attention, in order to show its fallacy. He says that the result of the Committee, if constituted as originally proposed, would have been a foregone conclusion. Even as originally proposed, there would have been two hon. Members who have distinctly expressed their opinion in favour of the principle of betterment, besides which the Committee of Selection were charged to place on the Committee four Members who, as far as possible, would be chosen because they were totally unprejudiced with reference to the question laid before them. My noble Friend the Member for Brixton has not said one word antagonistic to the County Council, and he has in no way pledged himself against the proposal made in this Bill. To substitute the hon. Member for Battersea for my noble Friend would entirely destroy the balance of Parties on the Committee, and it has always been understood that the balance of Parties on a Hybrid Committee should follow the balance of Parties in the House, as far as possible.

*MR. CREMER: What I said was that the hon. Members for Peckham and Harrow have certainly expressed themselves against the Bill, and being nominated with the noble Marquess, I think I was justified in saying that the Report would be a foregone conclusion.

*MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Gentleman forgot that the Committee is to be reinforced by four Members appointed by the Committee of Selection, which destroys any justification for saying that the Report would be a foregone conclusion.

(4.0.) The House divided:—Ayes 164; Noes 94.—(Div. List, No. 64.)

Mr. LAWSON and Mr. BAUMANN nominated other Members of the Committee.

Mr. Cremer

Ordered, That the Select Committee do consist of eleven Members, Seven to be nominated by the House, and Four by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson and Sir Joseph Pease be added to the Committee.—(*Sir John Lubbock.*)

MOTIONS.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of the Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 39.

QUESTIONS.

THE DOUGHTY CHARITY.

MR. SAMUEL HOARE (Norwich): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther) whether his attention has been called to the recent correspondence between the Town Council of Norwich and the Charity Commissioners with reference to the scheme for the administration of the Doughty Charity; whether he is aware that the opinion expressed by the Town Council has been confirmed in a Common Hall by the general body of the citizens of Norwich, and that this opinion is in favour of some modification in the scheme with reference to grants to the most necessitous poor; and whether the Commissioners are prepared to give further consideration to the unanimous wishes of the citizens of Norwich on this important question?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The answer to the first and second questions is in the affirmative. That provision in the scheme which prohibits the application of the funds of the charities in relief of the poor rates is merely declaratory of the general law, as laid down by a long series of decisions in the Court of Chancery, namely, that in the absence of express directions in their favour in the instrument creating the trust, persons in receipt of parochial relief are disqualified from participating in funds subject to a trust for the benefit of the poor. Under these circumstances the Commissioners are unable to entertain the application now made for the modification of the scheme.

WOOLLEN MANUFACTURE IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, at the Union between England and Scotland, the sum of £2,000 was set apart for the encouragement of woollen manufacturing in the shires of Scotland; whether he will consent to furnish a Report from those who administer the fund as to what has been done with it during the century; what is the present position of the fund, and by what authority has a part, if not the whole, of the fund been diverted from its original purpose; whether he will consent to a Representative Body, in touch with manufacturers, being appointed, who would administer the fund more successfully than a permanent Board in Edinburgh; and whether he will promise that, until the matter has been fully investigated, no step will be taken to dispense the fund in a different direction from what was originally intended?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): The sum named was set apart under the Treaty of Union for "promoting the manufacture of coarse wool within those shires which produce it." This provision was declared to be for seven years, after which the sum was to be wholly applied towards "encouraging and promoting the fisheries and such other manufactures as should most conduce to the general good of the United Kingdom." A Report for the period named would not only be costly, but very troublesome to prepare, and I am unable to consent to furnish it. The authority for the present use of the funds is to be found in the Act 10 and 11 Vict., c. 91, by which Statute power is given to the Treasury (now the Secretary for Scotland) to appropriate such part of the fund as they shall think fit towards education in art generally, including taste and design in manufacture. I am unable to consent to either of the suggestions contained in the last two paragraphs of the question, as the present Board appear to administer the fund in accordance with the Statute, and have recognised the manufacturing interest by the encouragement they give to a largely attended School of Design in Manufacture, which they established many years ago.

PRISON CLERKS.

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Departmental Committee upon which the Treasury is represented, appointed in 1886 to inquire into the complaints of the clerks in Her Majesty's prisons, is still sitting; and, if they have concluded their labours, whether he will inform the House of the result of their inquiry?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): This Committee has not yet finally reported, its recommendations having been held in suspense, pending the appeal made by the prison clerks to the Royal Commission on Civil Service Establishments for a special investigation of their cause. It was not thought desirable to anticipate any recommendations which might be made by the Royal Commissioners. However, as no special reference has been made by the Royal Commission to the case of the prison clerks, the Committee are now prepared to complete their recommendations, and will shortly issue their Report.

THE NEW CODE.

Mr. SPENCER BALFOUR (Burnley): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether those assistant teachers who have hitherto satisfied the requirements of Article 50 of the present Code, will be recognised as assistant teachers under Article 50 of the New Code?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir W. Hart Dyke, Kent, Dartford): Article 50 of the New Code is not intended to affect the position of assistant teachers who have been recognised as such under previous Codes.

Mr. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is intended by Article 12 of the new Education Code to empower School Board authorities to erect special schools or adapt existing ones for the purposes of scientific and technical instruction; and whether, if so, it is intended that provision in the same direction should be made for the scholars attending voluntary schools?

Sir W. HART DYKE: One of the objects of Article 12 of the New Code is to enable the managers of schools, both Board and voluntary, to make arrangements for the central instruction of scholars in certain special subjects with a view to greater economy and efficiency. My hon. Friend will find schemes of this nature more clearly defined in Article 90.

INDIA—AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has determined on any legislation as to the indebtedness of the agricultural classes in the Central Provinces, which, on 23rd August last, it was stated was "engaging the attention of the Government of India," owing to the Chief Commissioner having reported that—

> "Unless relief in the direction of legislation is afforded, the land will pass into the hands of of the money lenders;"

and whether he can state why, in the admittedly serious condition of affairs, no legislation on the matter was introduced into the Viceroy's Legislative Council during the past Session in Calcutta?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): When the hon. Member put the question upon the Paper the Secretary of State telegraphed to India, and he expected to have an answer by this time, but it has not been received.

BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE—MR. LUSON.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware that grave disaffection exists in Jessore, Bengal, in consequence of the action of Mr. Luson, a member of the Civil Service, towards certain ryots in indigo cultivation tracts; whether certain Hindu Magistrates have been removed from the sub-divisions of Jhinedah and Majurah, Jessore District, to other sub-divisions at the instance of the indigo planters of the district; whether Mr. Luson was appointed to take charge of these sub-divisions; whether such an arrangement is in accordance with the practice in Indian administration; whether he is aware that Mr. Luson was formerly in charge of the neighbouring sub-division of Meturpore, and, while so in charge, ordered 50 villagers to be whipped for fishing, which conduct was characterised by Sir Comer Peterham, the Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta, as violent and illegal; whether the ryots of the sub-divisions of Jhinedah and Majurah have addressed a Petition to Mr. Luson alleging various illegalities and oppressive conduct in his magisterial capacity; whether Mr. Luson, for alleged misdemeanours in reference to indigo cultivation, summarily tried, is now sending cultivators to gaol in batches, and imposing heavy fines; and whether, if these circumstances have not been brought to his notice, the Secretary of State will, without delay, inquire into the facts?

Sir J. GORST: The Secretary of State has no ground for supposing that grave disaffection exists in the Jessore district, but he is aware that certain native newspapers have made statements similar to those indicated in the question. The Secretary of State has no official information on the points raised except as to the conviction of villagers by Mr. Luson for illegal fishing. The conviction was quashed, but the Secretary of State is not aware that the Chief Justice stated Mr. Luson's conduct to be violent and illegal. The Secretary of State has no reason to interfere with the vigilance which the Local Government always exercises in matters between indigo planters and ryots.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware from the newspaper reports that such facts are alleged, and if they are not sufficiently grave to require an answer?

Sir J. GORST: The Secretary of State is not in the habit of addressing inquiries to the Local Governments of India in regard to statements in the local newspapers. If the hon. Member will make a proper complaint no doubt it will be made the subject of a Report to the Secretary of State.

SMALLPOX IN CALCUTTA.

Mr. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he has information of the serious prevalence of smallpox at Calcutta; and whether it is contemplated by a Privy Council Order, or otherwise, to empower

Local Authorities to detain in quarantine every ship which is infected with small-pox arriving at British ports?

SIR J. GORST: So far as the Secretary of State's information goes there has been no serious outbreak of small-pox in Calcutta, and nothing to call for special precautions in this country.

HALL-MARKING INDIAN SILVER PLATE.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, before he finally decides upon the question of hall-marking of Indian silver plate, of rupee standard, he will cause inquiry to be made respecting the practice of "soldering" in India on the part of native workmen; whether this practice varies immensely; whether any fixed standard would apply to Indian art workmanship; and, whether, in view of the valuable Reports of Her Majesty's Consuls, in Parliamentary Paper, No. 59, Foreign Countries (Gold and Silver Marking), it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government, before proceeding to amend the laws relating to the hall-marking of gold and silver wares, to refer the matter to a Select Committee?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): So far as this question refers to India, I can assure the hon. Member that nothing will be done without close consultation with the Government of India, and we are now in communication with the Indian Government on the subject. As regards the modifications in hall-marking law, they are so very slight that we see no necessity for referring this matter to a Select Committee.

*MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Government have decided to prolong the date for the abolition of the duty on gold plate?

*MR. GOSCHEN: No; I find it is not possible to prolong the date. We have satisfied ourselves that although we might meet some difficulties by postponement, yet out of this new difficulties would arise.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Will the right hon. Gentleman say when the proposal for the change in hall-marking will be before the House?

*MR. GOSCHEN: Practically, only technical changes will be necessary to break the connection between the levying of the duty and hall-marking; it will not be necessary to make any material alteration of the law in relation to hall-marking.

MR. JOBSON'S TIME FUSE.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the time fuse, referred to by him as having been paid for at the Elswick Works, was the plan of Lord Armstrong or Mr. Jobson?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I can only say that the claims of Mr. Jobson have been investigated over and over again. I am convinced that justice has been done, and I must decline to re-open the question.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUG ACTS.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Metropolitan Magistrates have yet conferred together with the object of arriving at some common understanding as to the administration of the Sale of Food and Drug Acts?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir: the Chief Magistrate informs me that he has conferred with his brother Magistrates on this subject. They were unanimous as to the importance of the Acts and as to the principle which should guide them in fixing the amount of fines; and they attributed the difference in the amount of fines inflicted solely to the variety of the circumstances in each case, the variation ranging from gross fraud to simple accident, and from large to very small adulteration.

IRELAND—COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE.

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to insults received by a party of Irish and English ladies and gentlemen at the hands of members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, on the 14th of April, narrated as follows by the *Cork Examiner* of the 16th April:—

> "When the waggonette got about 300 yards outside Cashel, the police car . . . drove up furiously, and actually forced the horse's head into the body of the waggonette in which were seated the ladies. . . . The police in a body started the singing of 'The Rising of the Moon,' as loud as their vocal organs would permit. . . . The preservers of law and order exhibited some extraordinary symptoms of drunkenness . . . and one of them cried out to the travellers, who were supposed to be under their most careful vigilance, 'Come out and give us a song up there.' . . . Finding that no response was being made to anything they said, one of them cried out, 'Drive on there, old fogey.' Their efforts to intimidate Mr. Stewart, M.P., having failed, the police again resorted to the most disorderly shouting and jeering. . . .
>
> "The matter assuming so serious an aspect, and taking into consideration that each of these policemen was armed with a loaded revolver, it was decided that the protection . . . of the police at the next barrack should be invoked. Consequently a stop was made at the police barrack at Golden, and Mr. Halley Stewart, M.P., Mr. Morton, and Mr. John Cullinane entered the barrack, and inquired for the sergeant in charge. . . . Mr. Stewart then proceeded to make a statement to the sergeant, and while doing so Acting Constable Mooney frequently interrupted him, and, when he tried to remonstrate with the acting constable for not allowing him to speak, the constable replied, 'Haven't I as good a right to speak as you?' In compliance with a request from Mr. Stewart, the other constables were brought forward for the purpose of getting their names, and when one of them, Constable Maddock, entered, he, while propping himself against the wall so as to be able to remain standing, said, 'Don't give my name to him. How the h—l do I know who he is?'
>
> "While Mr. Stewart and the other gentlemen were in the barrack at Golden, one of the constables came up to the end of the waggonette, and, addressing the ladies, who remained on the car, said, 'They were a d——n lot of loafers.'
>
> "When the waggonette arrived at Tipperary, they drove direct to the police barrack, where a similar complaint was made to that at Golden, to District Inspector Gamble. Mr. Gamble said he regretted the occurrence, but refused to bring the constables forward;"

and whether he will direct an inquiry into the conduct of the police, and take measures to protect Irish and English ladies and gentlemen, peaceably returning at night to their homes, from the dangers to which they are subject when followed by drunken policemen armed with loaded revolvers?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The account which I have received of this regrettable incident does not accord in all its details with the newspaper account to which the hon. Gentleman calls my attention; but there appears to be no doubt that two policemen were drunk. They have been severely punished for this offence against the discipline of the force; but if this is not considered sufficient, and if either on personal or public grounds the hon. Member or anybody else thinks it necessary or desirable to take further action, it is, I believe, within their competence to swear an information against the policemen before a magistrate.

MR. H. STEWART: Why has punishment been limited to the two policemen? As I can vouch for the accuracy of the narrative I have submitted to the Chief Secretary, will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table the information by which it was contradicted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir; I do not think it would be worth while, unless the differences were upon points of material importance, which I do not gather that they are. One of the men was a sergeant, and he has been degraded to the ranks and placed at the bottom of the list—a punishment which deprives him of considerable pay and privileges, and of promotion for some time to come. The other constable has been fined, and the fine carries with it the deferring of his promotion for a considerable period.

MR. H. STEWART: Why were only these two men fined?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: They were the two who were guilty of an offence.

LAND COMMISSION—CO. MAYO,

MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if, so long as February, 1888, an originating notice to have a fair rent fixed, was served on his landlord by Mr. George Ormsby, of Killenna, Ballycastle, County Mayo; whether any Sub-Commission under the Land Act has held any sittings in that locality since the date named; and whether he can say when cases in this part of Mayo are going to be heard?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners report that the fact is substantially as stated in the first paragraph. There was a Sub-Commission sitting for the district in question last May, and the Sub-Commission now sitting in the county will again take up cases for the district in its turn. The case referred to will then be listed for hearing.

THE ROYAL ARTILLERY.

MR. CREMER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the following is correctly transcribed from the Royal Artillery Head Quarter Office, Western District, District Regimental Orders of the 25th March, 1890:—

> "Transfers (II.) 968 C. A trumpeter and several gunners are required to complete the establishment of the St. Helena Detachment. Officers commanding will forward A. F. 1391 for any men desirous of transfer by 28th instant. Men of the Roman Catholic persuasion are not to be included;"

and whether such notices are known of or sanctioned at Head Quarters?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I believe that the Order is correctly quoted from a notice issued in the Western District without reference to Head Quarters. As there will be no Roman Catholic priest available at St. Helena for religious ministration, it was thought advisable to limit this small detachment to denominations for which religious ministrations can be provided.

BOILER EXPLOSION.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Committee of Inquiry into the boiler explosion at Uphall, Mid-Calder, appointed under "The Boiler Explosion Act, 1882," has yet reported; if so, whether, and when the Judgment will be laid upon the Table; and whether the Report by Mr. Lewis, official of the Board of Trade, will also be presented?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The formal investigation into the boiler explosion at Uphall, Mid-Calder, was held at Bathgate on the 10th, 11th, and 17th inst., and the Commissioners delivered Judgment on the last-named day, but their Report has not yet been received. When it is received it will be published in the usual course. The Report of Mr. Lewis will not be made public, as the formal investigation took place subsequently.

THE FASTING MAN.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the case of the fasting man at the Westminster Aquarium, who professes to be undergoing a 40 days' fast, and who claims to have accomplished nearly the whole of that period, and who is exhibited there for money; and whether the Government can take any steps to prevent exhibitions which may endanger life and are otherwise open to objection? I have learned since I put the question on the Paper that the fast has been completed.

MR. MATTHEWS: The law gives me no power to interfere with the public performances of adult persons on account of their danger or their folly. The fasting man has requested the Managing Director of the Aquarium to assure me that he has in no way suffered from his long fast, and is willing this afternoon to satisfy any Member of this House that this is the case. If the performance is open to objection on grounds other than those of danger, the Licensing Authorities might possibly take the matter into consideration when the next application is made for a licence.

TREATMENT OF UNCONVICTED PRISONERS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the case of a boy named Robert Hood, an apprentice printer in Ayr, who was recently apprehended on a charge of assault, was marched through the public street, handcuffed between two policemen, to Ayr Prison, and on arrival there was stripped of his own clothes, forced into a cold bath, compelled to assume the prison garb, given oakum to pick, and eventually was brought before the Sheriff to emit his declaration clad in the prison dress; and whether it is consistent with the Regulations of Her Majesty's Prisons that an untried, unconvicted prisoner, who may be proved innocent of the charge against him, should be subjected to such treatment?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The facts of this case are materially different from those indicated in the question. There being reasonable ground for apprehending an escape the constables secured the wrists of the accused, but not with handcuffs. When Hood came to the prison he was supplied with a warm bath and clean clothes, which are set apart for untried prisoners, and he availed himself of these. He was told that he might either work or not, as he liked, but that if he chose to work he would be credited with marks, which meant money on going out, and he preferred working. When he went before the Sheriff he did so in the clean clothes, going and returning by a private passage. He was in the prison for only five hours. His treatment, while in prison, was consistent with the regulations.

LORD ST. LEONARD'S ACT.

MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the following notice in the *London Gazette* office, namely—

> "All advertisements purporting to be issued in pursuance of Statutes or under Orders of the Court must be signed by a Solicitor of the Supreme Court;"

whether the notice is enforced in the case of executors' and administrators' advertisements under Lord St. Leonard's Act, 22 and 23 Vic. c. 35; and, if so, what justification there may be for adding a rule not imposed by that Act, and which may entail unnecessary expenditure on estates of small amount; and whether he will direct an alteration of the official rule complained of?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The Order in question is enforced in all cases of advertisements purporting to be issued in pursuance of statutes or under Orders of the Court. Its object is to secure the *bona fides* of advertisements tendered for insertion in the *London Gazette*, and I think the importance and necessity of this object justify the means adopted to attain it.

REPAIR OF ROADS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. HUGH ELLIOT (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been directed to the resolutions passed at Glasgow on the 16th April by the representatives of the Scotch Police burghs in regard to the management and repair of roads and streets in police burghs; and whether he can see his way to give effect to these resolutions, either by the introduction at an early date of the Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill, or of a Bill to amend "The Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Act, 1878," on the basis of Section 133 of the Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill, which section has reference to highways within police burghs, and was agreed to by the Select Committee on the Bill in 1888?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have seen the resolution referred to in the question. While there is, doubtless, considerable force in the representations of the police burghs it is impossible to ignore the fact that their proposals, in so far as altering the relations between counties and burghs, are opposed by some of the counties interested, and I cannot undertake to initiate legislation on those points.

CEYLON—PADDY TAX.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is a fact that the average yield of taxes on paddy and fine grain in Ceylon comes to about 850,000 rupees; and whether it costs an average of 200,000 rupees a year to collect it?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The taxes on paddy and fine grain in Ceylon realised in 1887, 934,804 rupees; and in 1888, 937,637. The Estimate for 1890 is 945,380 rupees. The cost of collection cannot be given, as it is impossible to estimate how much of the time of the Administrative officers is devoted to this one tax, and, therefore, how much of their salaries should be charged against it.

OUTRAGE IN CRETE.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to a telegram in the *Manchester Guardian* of the 22nd instant, from its own correspondent in Athens, dated 21st instant, to the following effect:—

> "I learn that a party of soldiers carried off Marie Damanaki, aged 15, from Pantavasso to

Aghia Parvara, where she was outraged by the officer commanding the regular troops;"

and, if not, will he ascertain whether this detailed statement be true, and, in case of its proving accurate, will he take steps to procure punishment of the guilty parties?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The officer accused of having violated the young girl is under arrest, and the Vali has ordered an inquiry to be held by the local tribunals.

THE MILITARY PRISON AT BRIXTON.

MR. CRILLY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the extent of accommodation for prisoners in the Military Prison at Brixton; how many prisoners are at present confined there; how these prisoners are classified; and whether it is in contemplation to abandon the use of the Brixton Prison for Military purposes; and, if so, to what purposes it is proposed to devote the building?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The Military Prison at Brixton contains 493 cells, of which 69 were occupied on the 21st inst. Like other prisoners under sentences of imprisonment, the men are on a system of progressive stages. The question of the continuance of the prison has not yet arisen; but in view of the great and very satisfactory reduction in the number of military prisoners, the point will, I think, have soon to be considered.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS IN CLONMEL GAOL.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the inquest recently held in Tipperary on the body of Michael Cleary, who died shortly after his release, after two months' imprisonment, from Clonmel Gaol, at which the Coroner's Jury found that the deceased man died of chronic pneumonic phthisis, and that his death had been accelerated by his treatment in Clonmel Gaol, and especially to the evidence of Dr. Conway and Dr. Charles Ryan, J.P., of Tipperary, who swore that Michael Cleary had been suffering from phthisis for some months before his imprisonment, and that, in their opinion, any competent medical man must, upon careful examination, have discovered unmistakeable symptoms of the disease at the time of his imprisonment; was Michael Cleary kept from the 14th November until the 5th December, 1889, upon the ordinary hard labour treatment in Clonmel Gaol, including close confinement in his cell for 22 hours out of every 24, the use of the plank bed, 10 hours daily labour, and the ordinary hard labour diet; can he explain how it happened that Dr. Hewitson, the prison doctor, did not examine Cleary's lungs until he had been in gaol from 14th November to the 25th November, and during that time reported him fit for hard labour and for two periods of 24 hours punishment on bread and water and close confinement, without making any such examination of his lungs; is it a fact that from the 5th of December until the 22nd Cleary was in the prison hospital suffering from blood-spitting; that on the 22nd December he was reported "well"; and on the 29th of December sent back to his cell with 22 hours out of every 24 solitary confinement and 10 hours daily labour at oakum picking; is he aware that Dr. Conway and Dr. Charles Ryan, J.P., swore that when they saw him a few days after his release from prison, they were shocked at the change in his appearance, and found him to be in a hopeless and dying condition, and that these doctors and Dr. Laffan, of Cashel, who attended him at his death, swore his death had been accelerated by his prison treatment, and that the form of phthisis from which he suffered was of old standing and was amenable to treatment; was a post-mortem examination held, and did its results confirm these opinions; was a portion of one lung submitted to an eminent pathologist in Dublin, and did he confirm the views of the local doctors; and what action the Prison Board mean to take in this matter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board report that on the 10th and again on the 23rd of this month, they applied to the Coroner for a copy of the evidence taken at the inquest on Michael Cleary. The Coroner has undertaken to furnish it, but it has not yet been received. Upon receipt of the official copy of the evidence, the Board proposes to make such inquiry as, in their opinion, the facts may call for. Meantime, they are not in a position to discuss the evidence.

COUNTY OF LONDON SESSIONS.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has been informed that, on Thursday last, Mr. Somes, Deputy Chairman, jurymen, counsel, and witnesses were present at the County of London Sessions, Newington Division, and were prepared to go on with the business, but that a letter was read from Sir Peter Edlin, stating that, as two Courts were sitting at Clerkenwell, the Court was to be adjourned, and that the adjournment took place, to the great inconvenience and expense of all concerned; whether an adjournment under similar circumstances took place on Thursday, 17th April; and what action it is proposed to take to prevent similar occurrences?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by Sir Peter Edlin that an adjournment did take place last Thursday, as stated. The business at Newington for the week ending the 19th was not concluded in that week, and was adjourned to the 24th, the Chairman hoping that by that date the business beginning at Clerkenwell on the 21st would be concluded. This anticipation, unfortunately, was not realised; and accordingly, as there is no power under the Local Government Act to appoint Chairmen of the Second Court to sit contemporaneously at Clerkenwell and Newington, there was nothing to be done but to further adjourn the Newington business. The Second Court sat at Newington the entire day on the 17th of April. Until a new scheme is submitted for London Sessions, as provided in the Local Government Act, a recurrence of these circumstances can only be prevented by longer adjournments.

WAR OFFICE CONTRACTS—SELF-EXTRACTING REVOLVERS.

MR. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether a contract has been made with Messrs. Webley, of Birmingham, for the manufacture of a new form of self-extracting revolver for the Army and Navy; and, if so, what is the date of the contract; whether the patterns of the revolver and the cartridge have been finally settled in detail; and whether any of the sample revolvers supplied by the contractors have broken down through failure of the breech fastening or any other cause?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Contracts for the revolvers referred to were entered into with Messrs. Webley on the 24th of November, 1887, and the 28th of August, 1889. The details of the pistol have been settled, but not of the ammunition, and the only failure of a sample revolver was in testing experimental ammunition. There has been no failure of the breech fastening.

CANDIDATES FOR TRAINING COLLEGES IN GLAMORGANSHIRE.

MR. DAVID THOMAS: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware of the inconvenience and expense to which candidates from Glamorganshire for admission to Training Colleges are put in attending the examinations; whether he will consider the desirability of holding these examinations at more convenient centres, as is done in the case of the Christmas examinations for certificates; and whether he will arrange to locate one such centre in Glamorganshire?

SIR W. HART DYKE: No complaint of inconvenience or expense has reached me; but if the School Board in any locality apply for a special centre upon sufficient grounds no difficulty will be raised by the Department.

MILITARY FORCE AT CLARE CASTLE.

MR. JORDAN (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Military have been permanently withdrawn from Clare Castle, County Clare; if so, can he explain why; and, if not, will he state when another detachment will be stationed there?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The Military have been withdrawn, the condition of the district being, I am glad to say, such that the presence of the force is no longer necessary.

EXCISE AND CUSTOMS APPOINTMENTS.

MR. JORDAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any examination for Customs appointments was held since October, 1887, or for Excise since May, 1887; whether these services, or any of them, are insufficiently manned; and will he state if any future examinations will be held, and when?

MR. JACKSON: So far as the Customs are concerned no appointments to outdoor officerships have been made since August, 1888, or to clerkships since November of that year. These are the only two junior grades of appointments which are open to competition under the Civil Service Commissioners. The last open competition for the Excise was in May, 1887. Since then vacancies in the Excise have been filled up by the appointment of men who had passed for the Customs, but were found not to be required for that Department, and also by the transfer of certain writers. Neither service is insufficiently manned, and no date has been fixed for any future examination.

THE MEDICAL OFFICER IN THE KILLANIR DISTRICT.

MR. JORDAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland why the Constabulary in the Killanir Dispensary district, Ennis Union, County Clare, were taken from under the medical care of Dr. T. R. Killeen, the medical officer of the district, and who was receiving pay from the Constabulary at the time, and handed over to Dr. Faris, Ennis, who had no connection with the district; whether the Inspector General of Royal Irish Constabulary issued, or caused to be issued, an order under the regulations of the Force, that every medical officer of a dispensary district should be medical attendant on the constabulary of his district if he cared to accept the position, and provided he was not unfitted for the appointment; whether Dr. Killeen was unfitted; and whether there is another dispensary district in Clare where the medical officer for such district is not also medical attendant on the constabulary in his district?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that Dr. Killeen had merely acted under a private arrangement with the previous medical attendant as his *locum tenens* when the latter was incapacitated through ill health, but he had never been the appointed Constabulary medical attendant of the district. There is no regulation of the nature indicated in the second paragraph. Prior to 1883 some such regulation did exist, but it was in that year cancelled by the Government of the day, as it was found to work unsatisfactorily. The gentleman appointed in the room of the late medical attendant has been selected by the Constabulary authorities as being, in their opinion, the most suited for the appointment. The reply to the inquiry in the last paragraph is in the affirmative.

BOOK POST RATE TO AUSTRALIA.

An hon. MEMBER on behalf of Sir GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, in view of the recent establishment of an all-sea-route for Mails to Australia; and, having regard to the rates levied on packets exceeding four ounces in weight, whether he will take into consideration the expediency of reducing the postage of Book Post packets for the Australian Colonies?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): I can assure my hon. Friend that the question to which he has called my attention has not been lost sight of. For some time past I have recognised the expediency of giving some relief in regard to book and sample packets for Australasia exceeding 4 oz. in weight; but difficulties have hitherto intervened. Those difficulties have now been removed; and I am happy to be able to inform the House that, with the approval of the Treasury, a reduced scale of charge will be introduced from the 1st of May for book packets and patterns sent by the all-sea route to Australia. A public notice on the subject will be issued to-morrow.

PROMOTION IN THE LIVERPOOL POST OFFICE.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that, in the recent promotions in Liverpool, Messrs. R. J. Thompson and W. Clucas, the Chairman and Secretary of the Local Branch of the United Kingdom Postal Clerks' Association, have been superseded by officers junior to themselves; whether these officers have, for some years, been performing duties of the superior class in a perfectly satisfactory manner; and, whether, in view of the undertaking given by the Postmaster General in March last, that connection with an Association or Union should not detrimentally affect any officer's official career, he will state the reasons for not promoting these gentlemen in due course?

*MR. RAIKES: It is the case that Messrs. Thompson and Clucas are not among the members of the Liverpool Post Office who have been recently promoted, and that others, junior to themselves, have been placed above them. It is also the case that, occasionally, during the temporary absence of Members of the class immediately above them, these two officers have, in common with others, been called upon to perform the duties of the absentees. But it is not the case that they have for some years been performing those duties in a perfectly satisfactory manner. On the contrary, their conduct, even in the discharge of their own duties, has not been such as to deserve promotion or to leave me any alternative but to pass them over. That they were members of any particular Association was not even known to me, and the Postmaster of Liverpool, on whose recommendation the promotions were made, assures me that he also was unaware of the circumstance. In order to show how little such considerations influence the decision, I may add—a circumstance which had not come to my knowledge until to-day—that Mr. Thompson's predecessor in the Association to which the hon. Member refers, and also an officer who is an office-bearer in another Society of similar character, are among those who have been recently promoted, and I am pleased to hear that in both cases the selection has been amply justified.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the promotions in the Liverpool Post Office, recently referred to by the Postmaster General, are practically confined to the supervising classes; whether any immediate benefit is to be conferred upon the general body of sorting clerks; and whether sorting clerks will be called upon to give evidence before the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into their grievances?

*MR. RAIKES: The Liverpool promotions concerned only the supervising classes, and the class which is intermediate between the supervisors and the general body of the staff, as I explained to the House on the 15th instant. The questions relating to this general body are of a much more complicated character, and, as the hon. Member is aware, are being examined by a Departmental Committee. It will be obvious that I have come to no conclusions on these questions. It will rest with the Committee to call for such evidence as it requires, but I should deprecate any extension of the inquiry that would lead to undue delay in completing the investigation.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what the Treasury propose to do for those writers who were recommended by the Heads of Departments for promotion to the Lower Division, and were not so promoted?

MR. JACKSON: I am not aware of any proposals affecting the writers to whom the hon. Member refers.

STARVATION IN THE EAST END OF LONDON.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been directed to the recent case of the starvation of a docker's wife in the East End; and if it is possible to take measures to obviate these cases, two of which have occurred during the last fortnight?

*MR. RITCHIE: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that I have no information in regard to the cases to which he refers. If he will be good enough to furnish me with some particulars, I will take care that proper inquiry is made.

THE TRIAL OF MOUSSA BEY.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now inform the House what has been the result of the representations addressed to the Turkish Government by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on the subject of the deplorable failure of justice in the case of the so-called trial of Moussa Bey for murder and outrages committed by him?

*Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Inquiry into the charges still pending against Moussa Bey is proceeding, but, as the preliminary proceedings are held with closed doors, no dragoman can attend, and Her Majesty's Ambassador is, therefore, without any official information as to the present state of the criminal proceedings. It is, however, rumoured that the charges against Moussa Bey are held not to have been established in the preliminary inquiry in every case except one.

Mr. BRYCE: Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any indication of the time when something may probably be known to Her Majesty's Government?

*Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I think the hon. Gentleman will see from my reply that nothing is certainly known; how, therefore, can we form a conjecture as to the time the examination will occupy when we do not know accurately what is going on.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING AT LEEDS.

Mr. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can explain the circumstances under which the Board of Trade have refused the application of three Limited Companies for Parliamentary powers to supply electric lighting to the Borough of Leeds, notwithstanding the important demand for the electric light by the inhabitants; and whether this refusal was in consequence of the opposition of the Local Authority; and, if so, can he state whether the Local Authority has taken any steps itself to apply for powers for supplying Leeds with the electric light?

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: The Board of Trade refused to proceed with the applications of the three companies referred to in consequence of their not having obtained the consent of the Local Authority, as required by the Statute. The Corporation of Leeds state that a Committee of their body are engaged in an exhaustive and costly examination of the question of the supply of electricity, and they ask that the matter may be postponed until next year. The Board of Trade, in these circumstances, declined to dispense with the consent of the Corporation, but informed that body that, in the event of their not being prepared to apply for powers themselves next year, the Department would have to consider whether they could refuse to grant powers to other Promoters.

Mr. WADDY: Is it not a fact that the only step taken was the appointment of this Committee four months ago?

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: I understand that the Committee has been proceeding with its inquiry.

THE ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE VOTES.

Mr. JENNINGS (Stockport): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, considering that Vote 12, Navy Estimates (Admiralty Office), and Vote 10, Army Estimates (War Office), have, during the last two years, been postponed to so late a period of the Session that it was impossible to obtain time for their discussion, he will endeavour to bring forward these Votes at an earlier period of the present Session.

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): We hope that the discussion of the two Votes to which the hon. Member calls attention will be taken at a time which will afford ample opportunity for their consideration.

EXPENSES UNDER THE PLEURO-PNEUMONIA BILL.

Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL (Renfrew, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government see their way to provide for the expenses of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Pleuro-Pneumonia Bill without, on the one hand, encroaching on the grant for Pauper Lunatics, or, on the other, adding to the existing county rates?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Her Majesty's Government recognise the desirability of accomplishing both the objects stated by my hon. Friend. Fortunately, the proposed Beer and Spirits Duties afford us the means of doing so, and we propose that in Scotland the contribution to any costs of the execution of the Pleuro-Pneumonia Act not covered by the £140,000 to be provided by Parliament shall be a charge against the Scotch share of the new Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Duties instead of against the Grant for Pauper Lunatics. The necessary Amendment on the Pleuro-Pneumonia Bill will be put on the Paper.

Mr. BRYCE: Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us when the Amendments will be placed on the Paper, and when he proposes to take the Bill in Committee?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not able to say precisely when the Bill will be taken in Committee, but the Amendments shall be placed on the Paper in ample time for consideration by the Scotch Members.

LONDON SCHOOL BOARD BUILDINGS.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, considering the serious accusations of sanitary and other structural defects recently made against buildings erected by the London School Board, Government will give facilities for the consideration of the Sanitary Registration of Buildings Bill now before the House, or will themselves introduce a Bill to prevent the use of schools and other new public buildings until their fitness for sanitary occupation has been certified by some competent authority?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government cannot undertake to give any exceptional facilities for the consideration of the Sanitary Registration of Buildings Bill, nor can they at present give any undertaking to introduce a Bill to prevent the use of schools and public buildings until their sanitary fitness for occupation has been certified. The granting of certificates as to the sanitary fitness of premises is not unattended with risk, unless the duty of examination is exercised with great care and under circumstances which admit of a proper examination being made. Any certificate as to sanitary condition would be regarded as relieving

from responsibility, as regards sanitary arrangements, those on whom the responsibility should rest.

"FILLED" CHEESE.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can inform the House what is the amount of the article of food called "filled cheese," imported into, or manufactured in, Great Britain and Ireland; whether such importation or manufacture is on the increase, and to what extent; and whether the Government, if in the belief that it injures the sale of the genuine article, will legislate on the subject, with a view to marking "filled cheese," as was done in the Margarine Act?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: There is no official information respecting the amount of "filled" cheese manufactured in the United Kingdom. As regards importation, I am informed by the Customs that of imitation cheese, which would include "filled" cheese, 1,852 cwt., valued at £3,669, were imported in 1889, and 345 cwt., valued at £648, in the present year up to the 23rd instant. Previous to 1889 there were no entries of such cheese. As at present advised, I do not think it would be desirable to amend the Margarine Act.

HALL-MARKING OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

Mr. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will arrange that silver plate shall in future be hall-marked; not only the present standard of ·925 and the Indian standard of ·916, but also the American and French standards of ·900 and the German of ·800; and whether he is aware that gold watch cases are hall-marked from 22 to 9 carats, in order to facilitate trade in foreign and colonial markets, and that it is believed that similar modifications in hall-marking silver plate would help our silversmiths to compete with foreign manufacturers?

Mr. GOSCHEN: The answer to the second question is, Yes. As regards the first, I can only refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave last Tuesday. Theoretically I have no objection to the marking of British plate of any quality for exportation, which I understand is what the hon. Member is aiming at. But the great majority of the trade are in favour of compulsory hall-marking, and I do not see how the two can be combined. I may add that as soon as the Plate Duties are abolished, these matters cease to belong to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

INVOICES FOR THE UNITED STATES.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will now inform the House the result of the negotiations with the United States Government with regard to modification of the present inconvenient regulations in relation to the declarations which partners in firms have now personally to make on all consignments of goods to that country of the value of £10 and upwards?

*SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I cannot give the hon. Member any further information than I stated in reply to his question on the 31st of March. It is not a matter in which any good would be done by pressing the United States Government.

*Subsequently, MR. CAUSTON asked: Will the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade say whether he does not think it desirable that the United States Government should be pressed on this matter, and will he urge on the Foreign Office the importance of this subject?

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: I have not seen the question of the hon. Member, and I did not hear the answer.

*MR. CAUSTON: I will put down the question for another day.

REGULATIONS FOR FOREIGN SHIPS IN BRITISH PORTS.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether Clause 3 of the Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill is intended to compel foreign as well as British ships, loading at British ports, to conform to the regulations of the Board of Trade; and, if so, whether the Government is prepared to accept any foreign legislation or regulations of a like nature, which might be made applicable to British vessels loading at foreign ports?

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: Clause 3 of the Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill would appear to be intended to compel foreign as well as British ships loading at ports in the United Kingdom to conform to regulations with respect to loading made by the Board of Trade for preventing loss of life at sea. The Government would have no reason to object to the application of similar regulations to British vessels loading in foreign ports.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been drawn to the account of proceedings in a recent trial at Edinburgh before Lord Young, in which, after the charge to the jury, and before the jury had considered their verdict, a juror asked if there were any previous convictions against the prisoner, and Lord Young replied, "Oh, a lot of them, but they are not to be taken into account until you have returned your verdict"; and whether this reply was not against the spirit of the Criminal Law Procedure Act?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have no information other than that contained in a newspaper paragraph. If the hon. Member desires full information perhaps he will give notice of the question.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I will repeat the question on Friday.

RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling Burghs whether it is his intention to ask the House to proceed with the Religious Disabilities Removal Bill, which stands on the list of Orders for Second Reading tonight?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have had no notice of this question.

*MR. JOHNSTON: I apologise for not having given intimation of my question.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I may remind the hon. Member that the day for which the Bill was put down was unfortunately taken from me by the exigencies of public business, and since then I confess that the Bill has been in a hopeless position on the Notice Paper. I fully recognise it is a Bill as to which opportunity should be given to the House to express its opinion, and the object of the Bill requires a full statement in explanation. Candidly, I do not think that an opportunity for this is likely to be afforded this Session; and I do not think it would be fair to avail myself of the casual chance of obtaining a Second Reading at the end of an evening. I think, therefore, I shall best consult the wishes of the hon. Member, as well as my own view of the convenience of the House, by moving at the proper time that the Order be discharged.

LICENCE DUTIES (SCOTLAND.)

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I take this opportunity to ask the right hon. Gentleman, the First Lord of the Treasury, whether he can make any statement with regard to the purposes in Scotland to which the Government propose to devote the proceeds of the new duties?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: We have been engaged in considering the question very carefully to day. I think the best course to take in the matter is to produce a scheme, in the form of a Bill, which I hope will be laid on the Table in the course of this week.

COURSE OF BUSINESS.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle upon-Tyne): I would ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it will be convenient to him to state what will be the course of business for the week; and whether, in view of the large number of Members who wish to take part in the debate on the Irish Land Purchase Bill, he will allow the Debate to be continued at the Morning Sitting on Tuesday?

MR. LABOUCHERE: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will take into consideration the fact that a large number of Members on this side entertain root and branch objections to the principle of the Bill.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have no doubt that there are Members on the Opposition Benches who entertain root and branch objections to the Bill; but they have had two nights on which to express their objections, and it does not necessitate a very long Debate in order that expression may be given to objections of that character. The Government are of opinion that the four nights' Debate

which has been arranged for is ample for the expression of opinion on both sides of the House; but if the right hon. Gentleman and his friends desire to extend the Debate by devoting Tuesday morning to it I will not resist the appeal. For myself, judging from the able speeches that have already been delivered, I think it is hardly possible to add much to what has been said already. In the event of the Debate being continued on Tuesday morning, the Government will expect that it will be concluded, in accordance with the understanding already arrived at, on Thursday; and I hope that, in these circumstances, we may proceed with the Allotments Bill on Friday morning.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Indian Councils Bill will be taken; the answer he has just given seems to preclude its being taken this week?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Not this week; and the Budget Bill will, I am afraid, occupy the greater part of next week.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Will the right hon. Gentleman say it will not be taken until after next week? It will be convenient to many Members to know.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I will undertake it shall not be taken this or next week.

*MR. W. H. SMITH rising again: Having regard to the interests involved in the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, it is desirable that it should be read a second time as soon as possible; and if an understanding can be arrived at that it shall be read a second time on Friday, I should be glad to take it instead of the Allotments Bill. I think it would be a public convenience if that could be done.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): Has the Bill been distributed?

MR. GOSCHEN: I believe the Bill is printed, and that it will be in the Vote Office this evening, and distributed to-morrow morning.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Surely the right hon. Gentleman does not expect that we can undertake that a Bill not yet issued shall be read a second time on Friday.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Will the right hon. Gentleman say when the Bill for dealing with public house licences will be before the House?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have already said I hope the Bill will be in the hands of Members this week.

THE IRISH POLICE.

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): The Chief Secretary, in answering my question just now, referred me to the ordinary process of law if I did not consider the misconduct of the policemen sufficiently punished. May I ask the right hon. Gentleman what punishment has been awarded; and whether, as I can vouch for the accuracy of the narrative I have submitted, the right hon. Gentleman will lay on the Table the information by which it is contradicted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir; I do not think it would be worth while, unless the differences were upon points of material importance, which I do not gather that they are. One of the men was a sergeant, and he has been degraded to the ranks and placed at the bottom of the list—a punishment which deprives him of considerable pay and privileges, and of promotion for some time to come. The other constable has been fined.

MR. HALLEY STEWART: How much?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I brought down the details with me, but I have now torn up the paper. I forget the amount, but the fine brings with it the postponement of prospect of promotion for a considerable period.

MR. HALLEY STEWART; And two of the men have not been fined?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not gather that the other two men committed any offence.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL—(No. 199.)

SECOND READING. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [21st April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and, at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

(5.0.) MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I very much regret that I am compelled to occupy so much time, but the responsibility for the inconvenience must rest with the Government, who have embodied in one Bill two subjects, each of them large enough to be dealt with separately. I pointed out on Thursday night what was the origin and history of the congested districts, showing how the congestion was caused by the ancestors of the present population being driven from their homes, in the eastern and central portions of Ireland, to waste and barren lands in the western districts, so as to enable the landlords of the latter lands to get rents which it was not possible otherwise to obtain. Thus the congestion of the western districts was deliberately encouraged, and long continued neglect of this horrible state of things by successive Governments has given these unhappy people a claim on the generosity of the English people, and on the attention of the House. Now, how does the Bill propose to deal with the matter? The Bill proposes to constitute another Board in Ireland, which has a sufficient number of Boards already. If Boards could improve the condition of Ireland, no country ought to be more prosperous or better governed, and I can say, on behalf of the people of Ireland, that not even the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary can reconcile them to another Board unless it is constituted on a principle different from that laid down. And what are to be the functions of the new Board? Those who have studied the speeches of the Chief Secretary and the Attorney General know that the function of the new Board is to be our old friend emigration. The main reliance of the Government is, to emigrate the people of the congested districts. When I turn to the speech of the Attorney General I find that he inverted the order in which emigration and migration were mentioned in the speech of the Chief Secretary. He also said he did not believe migration to be a possible scheme. He showed that there was no real and honest intention to give fair play to the migration scheme. Let me tell the Government, once for all, that if they lean upon emigration as a remedy for the congested districts it will be no remedy, and if that is their main proposal the Irish Members will oppose it, and will oppose the working of the Commission by every means in their power. Emigration has been tried upon our country in a way in which it has never been tried upon any country in the world, and we shall resist any scheme for increasing the tide of emigration, which is already fatally large. We know of the existence in Ireland of a small section who deliberately avow as their policy the reduction of the population down to two or three millions. If we turn to a remarkable work published lately by an American barrister who travelled in Ireland, Mr. Pellew, we find given there the opinion of a gentleman of the North of Ireland that Ireland will never be peaceable and prosperous until we get the population down to three millions, and until she becomes what nature intended her for, a farm for England. That is a policy which the Irish Party has always resisted, and always will resist. So much for the policy of emigration, which is the main policy put forward in this Bill. I now come to the other proposals contained in this Bill. Those proposals are of an extremely vague and indefinite character. First, there is the extraordinary proposal — and I will ask the attention of Liberal Members to it—that when a tenant wishes to part with his holding he shall be obliged to part with it either to a neighbour or to the Land Commission; and then it is provided that if the Land Commission, when they get possession, throw down the buildings, they shall pay the full value of them. Observe how that will work. The Land Commission is compelled to buy, at the full value, any holding which the tenant wishes to part with, if he does not sell it to a neighbour. The full value must be, at least, the value which the tenant paid to his landlord, or he will not consider that he is fairly treated. The tenant is not to be allowed to sell in the open market, but he is to be compelled to go either to the Land Commission or to a neighbour. If he goes to the latter he will probably not get full value. The result will be that the Land Commission, having advanced to the tenants the money to buy their holdings, will be obliged to buy a great many of those holdings again. That is the way in which this provision will work, and I say it will lead to a frightful loss of money to the Board, and to an immense quantity of jobbery and corruption. Next, they are to have power to sell for ready money only seed potatoes at cost price; they are not to make any money by the transaction. Did anybody ever hear of such a proposal? It is one which either will pauperise, or will be of an exceedingly trifling character. The right hon. Gentleman states that he has persuaded the Chancellor of the Exchequer to grant him funds for the purpose of discovering where the fish are on the West Coast of Ireland. "At present," said the Chief Secretary, "we are in a state of absolute ignorance as to the fishing resources of Ireland." Was there ever such a confession made before? Why, the subject has been before the House for 50 years, and if the Government are in a state of absolute ignorance as to the fishing resources in Ireland, the Manxmen and the French boats get thousands of pounds worth of fish off the Irish coast every year. Irishmen know, as well as Manxmen or Frenchmen, how and where to catch the fish; but they have neither the boats nor the harbours which are necessary. Then, this new Board may, if they like, improve the breeds of poultry in the West of Ireland, and, if they think fit, teach the art of fish-curing. I will take the liberty to read to the House some of the comments of the *Dublin Daily Express* on this great measure, which is to bring peace and happiness to Ireland. The *Express* holds that one of the causes of poverty is the cultivation of potato land in the congested districts, and it adds that the best thing that can be said of the Seed Potato Clause is to wish that it may be inoperative. With regard to instruction in fish-curing, the *Express* holds that that is a good thing, but it misses any mention of a power to buy boats or any fishing appliances. Certainly fish cannot be cured until they are caught, any more than a hare can be jugged until it is caught. The *Daily Express* goes on to say that these proposals, with the exception of the Seed Clause, can do no harm and may do some good, but they will not solve the congested districts problem. This is the deliberately expressed opinion of the organ of the Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Balfour, Manchester, E.): Organ of the Government?

Mr. DILLON: Yes, the organ of the Government, for the Chief Secretary subsidises it by giving it all the Government advertisements; but I am afraid that, after this exposure, the advertisements may be withdrawn. The *Express* sums up its opinion of this portion of the Bill by saying—

> "It is a very elaborate piece of machinery, no doubt, but as there is no coal in the furnace or water in the boiler, the engine cannot be expected to do much work."

Such is the judgment of the organ of the Ministerial Party in Ireland. The fact is, the Bill has no friends in Ireland, because its proposals are utterly futile and illusory. I now come to my second point, and that is as to the funds to be placed at the disposal of the new Board. I really had supposed that this Board was going to be liberally and generously endowed by the British Treasury for carrying out this scheme, but, to my horror, I find that there are absolutely no funds at all for carrying out this part of the measure. The sole provision in the Bill with regard to the procurement of funds merely gives the Board power to "accept any gifts of property made to them for the purposes of this Act." It is, no doubt, true that the sum of £1,500,000 is charged on what remains of the Irish Church surplus for the purposes of this part of the Act. But I protest against such a burden being placed on this fund. This is a purely Irish fund, and it will be wanted, when Home Rule is in operation, for purposes of education in Ireland. This fund it is now proposed to substitute in the congested districts for the guarantees provided in other parts of Ireland. What does that mean? The Chief Secretary admits that the only risk in the case of his Land Purchase scheme will be in the congested districts, and accordingly he is providing for such risks by means of what remains of the Irish Church Fund. This will have the inevitable result of allowing landlords to get more than the real value of their land. It is a direct incentive to the Land Commission to allow the landlord to get more than the real value. If the Irish Church surplus is to be used as a guarantee for the repayment of the purchase money in the congested districts, it will, instead of being used for the other objects of the Board, find its way into the pockets of the Connaught landlords. The Chief Secretary said that in the congested districts 14 years' purchase was the fair value of the land; but it is double the value of the land, and the result will be that the Church surplus will go in making up the guarantee on sales in such districts, and will, ultimately, disappear altogether. I protest absolutely and entirely against such a use of the surplus. A fund which is intended for the common benefit must not be allowed to go into the pockets of a class of men whom I may justly describe as the most utterly worthless class to be found in all the world. The landlords in the congested districts are an unmitigated curse. I protest against this part of the Bill on two grounds: First, because the substitution of a real guarantee for illusory ones will artificially raise the price of the holding, and give the Irish landlords more power than they are justly entitled to; and, secondly, because the fund will not be expended for the benefit of the people in the congested districts. The resources thus placed by the Bill at the disposal of the Board to be created, vanish away entirely upon critical examination of the measure. I shall resist, to the utmost of my power, this proposal so to utilise the Church Fund. If the difficulty in regard to the congested districts is to be settled, it ought to be settled out of funds provided from the Imperial Exchequer. If the Government are not prepared to act thus generously they ought not to touch the question at all, but leave it to be settled when the Irish people manage their own affairs. Unless your interference in this matter is based on broad and statesmanlike grounds you will simply make bad matters worse. With regard to the question of the congested districts generally, I desire to point out that it is absolutely essential that the House should clearly understand what the scheduled congested districts are to be. The hon. Member for South Tyrone, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in January last, defined them as all lying within 15 miles of the sea, to the west of a line drawn from Donegal to Kerry, and he said that these districts alone are in need of heroic remedies. This line of demarcation would exclude from the area of "the congested districts" all the grass lands from which the population have been driven into the congested districts. But the Board can do nothing if the contiguous grass lands are excluded from their jurisdiction. The Board should, if the scheme is to have any prospect of success, have control over all the counties of Donegal, Leitrim, Roscommon, Galway, and the western half of Cork and Kerry. The hon. Member, in the same article, gives figures showing the decrease of the population in certain districts, which include the rich grass lands of Galway and Roscommon, but he abstains from going into an analysis of the decrease, or he would have seen that it is in inverse proportion to the richness of the land; that where the land is worst the population has increased. And here I must refer to a cruel and brutal sentence in the article—a sentence of a nature which causes crime in Ireland. After treating of the question of depopulation, the hon. Member says—

> "The facts are all against the patriots, and no amount of screeching will prevent ranching."

By "screeching" the hon. Member, no doubt, means agitation. It is rather a dangerous thing to point out that mere Constitutional agitation will not put an end to a great grievance. In one district alone, seven or eight thousand houses have been levelled with the aid of the crowbar. Are we to be told, then, that no amount of screeching will prevent the destruction of the houses of the people? We have sought to induce the people to believe that agitation and debate in this House will save them from ranching. If the hon. Member tells us that screeching will not do it, then, I ask, what will do it? The system of ranching has been introduced into Ireland, and 120,000, perhaps 200,000 persons, have been swept out of that most fertile county the County of Meath, in 40 years. Ranching was also introduced into Tipperary, and out of the 420,000 people who lived there in 1849 there are now only 190,000, whilst 35,000 human habitations have been thrown down and levelled to the ground. That is what the hon. Member calls "ranching," and what he says is to be the future fate of Ireland. I believe that agitation and talking will stop this, and I must say I should take a gloomy view of Ireland if I did not think that by what the hon. Member is pleased to call "screeching," we shall be able to prevent the evils of which we complain. You must include in the congested districts the whole of the counties I have alluded to, and the first and preliminary step before anything else is done for the relief of the congested districts will be to deal with the question of ranching. It is not only useless but worse than useless—it is wrong to pour any money into those districts unless you do what I have suggested. If the land is rented at three times its value, what will be the effect of endeavouring to alienate the people by means of British money? You will simply enable tenants to pay rents which otherwise they could not possibly pay, and your money will go into the pockets of the landlords. The land in many cases is so poor that if the people paid any rent at all they could not live on it, and you propose to assist them to live on it by enabling them to pay £1 or 10s. an acre for land that is not worth a shilling, and to send armies to tear the roofs off their houses and turn them out into the ditches, if they do not continue to pay the rents. Before you deal with the question of congested districts you must deal with this question of ranching. It must be dealt with on entirely different principles in the West of Ireland. I should propose to deal with it on the lines laid down by General Gordon in his letter from the Glengariffe Hotel, in 1881. You speak of Gordon as a hero when he goes to the Soudan, and you raise statues to him, but when he speaks of Ireland and tells you what you ought to do with regard to the poor peasantry there, you shut your ears. Gordon is a prophet, like many another man, on various parts of the earth, but he was no prophet in Ireland because his verdict was not favourable to the Irish landlords. What did he say? He suggested the immediate buying out of the landlords by compulsion, and by totally different machinery from that which would be applied to the larger farms. I should propose, therefore, that in the West, before any attempt is made to alleviate the condition of the people, you should authorise the Congested District Commissioners to buy out all the Western landlords in respect of holdings valued at under £20 a year, by a rough and ready valuation. It should be done rapidly, and by a much cheaper and more effective machinery than you would apply to the ordinary condition of Ireland. I should roughly calculate that the figure at which you would buy out these men, would be about eight years purchase on Griffith's valuation. I maintain, and I am prepared to prove, that you would be giving more than the market value of the property in giving eight years purchase. I know men in the West of Ireland who paid six years purchase for their estates, and who are now getting 10 per cent. on their investment. Land is an article which is absolutely unsaleable and will never again be saleable in the open market. If you give the landlords eight years purchase you will be giving them more than the land is worth. What could you do then? You could immediately reduce the rents all over the West of Ireland by about 40 per cent. on Griffith's valuation. You could deal at the same time with the question of arrears in a liberal spirit, and you could, and you ought to, abolish all rent in the Western Islands—in Innisturk, Innisboffin, and Clare Island—because it is nothing short of a mockery to try to collect rents on those islands. You would then have laid the basis of a real and honest attempt to alleviate the condition of the people, because you would have stopped the drain on the rack rents, which are largely absentee rents, and which act as a leak in the West of Ireland. I would go on to say that in these districts the whole system of purchase of land and registration of title should be totally different from that prevailing in this country and in Dublin under the present Land Commission. When a sale was effected I would have the Commissioners take over the documents of the landlord and treat the entry in his book as the title of the tenant; and I would effect the sales at local centres, as is done in America, the whole transaction costing, perhaps, no more than 10s. In this way you would render the sale of holdings easy, and would establish a system which would be valuable both to Ireland and this country as well. I would affix to every holding in the West of Ireland affected by the Bill the following conditions:—No sub-letting; no sub-division of land; no mortgaging; and I would go further, and say—and this I would urge on the attention of the House, for it is of the utmost importance—that the interest in the holding of any of these tenants should not be seizable for any debts of any kind contracted after the passing of the Act. That is an important provision, which is gaining ground in America every day. It would remove the objection often urged against the plan I suggest, namely, that the tenants would get into the hands of the usurers, and it would sweep away a dangerous system of credit, which has been the cause of much evil. I am convinced the Irish bankers would rejoice to see the present system swept away, and I feel sure that the adoption of this plan I recommend would be a useful experiment, not only as regards Ireland, but also so far as England herself is concerned. I believe that the fears which are expressed as to the adoption of such a system as this increasing the congestion is perfectly illusory. Having done what I suggest, and having simplified and facilitated the sales of holdings, if you came in with a provision which I shall presently point out to alleviate the social condition of the people, the tendency would be towards consolidation of holdings, and not sub-division. If you could sell these holdings without lawyers, according as the people rose in the social scale, and got accustomed to live better, so they would object to see their children live like pigs, and as a man saved money without those disturbing influences which exist at present between landlord and tenant—such as boycotting—the farms would improve to such level as the economical condition of the country would point to. I would suggest to the Government that, to aid this process of consolidation, where one farm was purchased for the purpose of being joined to another the purchaser should have power to apply to the Commissioners to send a valuer on to the property, and if the valuer thought it desirable, he should be able to advance a portion—not all by any means—but, say, a fourth of the value of the buildings destroyed. That would give a neighbour a slight advantage over a stranger, and would aid the process of amalgamation. In the West the people have been reduced to a most abject state of poverty; and why? Because of the operation of unjust laws which have ground them down into a condition of wretchedness. I have seen in the West of Ireland three families, numbering 27 individuals, trying to get a living out of nine acres of bog, for which they paid a guinea an acre to a late Member of this House, whose name, however, I will not mention, though he sat here for 20 years. This landowner encouraged his tenant to plant one of his sons on each side of him in order to secure a miserable rent, regardless of the character of the land. That is the system which has been crushing the people down; and I maintain that those who have helped to pass the laws under which such a condition of things was possible should now give some consideration and fair play to us, who have been struggling to raise these people from the horrible morass of misery and degradation into which they have sunk. Then, I would re-distribute the Poor Law Unions in the congested districts, so as not to have a Union consisting wholly of a crowded and very poor district. The landlords have, in most cases, created these congested districts by driving the people from the good land, which they have turned into large grazing blocks. Are these blocks to go scot free? Certainly not. The rate where the clearances have taken place is down at a low figure, and in the districts to which the poor peasantry have been driven it is high, and in these districts, directly a period of distress comes, the whole Poor Law system collapses. To correct this I would give the Poor Law Authority power to levy exceptional rates on these blocks of grazing land, say of 100 acres. In an opposite direction the same principle was enforced in the old days of the tithe, and if, in the olden days, a differential rate was struck against the poor man, I do not see why there should not be a differential rate now against the rich exterminator. With regard to the Western seaboard, I would propose that we should have good deep sea harbours constructed there, and that a reasonable sum should be provided by way of loan, in order to enable the people to obtain boats, nets, and other appliances. Experiments in this direction having been tried in Ireland with the most complete success, I do not see why the Government should not follow on in the same course, and rescue many villages on the West Coast from their present condition of poverty and misery. I would give the Commissioners power to purchase grass lands and other tracts of land, and to use them for the purpose of migration. The Attorney General for Ireland has no faith in migration, but it appears to me that there are cases where the system might be tried with good prospects of success. I know a case in Western Mayo where land which has been let to a Scotch grazier, by Lord Sligo, might be obtained for this purpose. I am in favour, at all events, of granting sufficient funds to the Board of Commissioners to try the experiment. I would try it first on a very small scale, but I have always thought that the problem of dealing with congested districts in Ireland must be considered in the light of 20 years of work. I now come to the last point I have to trouble the House with, and I do not know that it is not the most important. We protest against the constitution of a new Board in Ireland, unless it be formed on different principles and of different materials from the old Board. Unless the Government give us and our Party a fair voice in the constitution of that Board, the scheme is doomed to failure. What reason is there for trying to settle the problem of congested districts without giving some voice—and I say it should be a preponderating voice—to the people who speak for every single tenant in those districts? You may question our right to speak for Ireland. You may talk of Ulster and the industrial people of Belfast, but is there a Member of this House who says we have no right to speak for the poor tenantry of the West of Ireland? If you are going to deal with this question, you must admit a majority of Nationalists to the Board. We want and would accept from you no salaries. Our men cannot touch salaries from the English Government in Ireland, and do not want to. If you are not prepared to do what we ask, I say your scheme is foredoomed to failure, and it is of not the slightest use to waste the enormous amount of time that must be taken up in discussing it, and to waste the money that will be expended in working the machinery of the measure. Before I sit down let me call the attention of the House to one fact. It is stated in Clause 54 that one member of the Congested District Board is to be a member of the Land Commission. Who is that member to be? Is it meant that Mr. John George M'Carthy shall be removed from the Land Commission and that that Commission shall be handed over to Mr. Wrench and Mr. Stanislas Wrench, who is the first cousin of the author of *Parnellism and Crime*, and the farmer of the worst land I have ever seen in Ireland? It is well known that Mr. J. G. M'Carthy has stopped some fraudulent sales, and that he has drawn upon himself the hatred of the Tory Party in Ireland, and if you withdraw him from the Commission its character will be thoroughly understood in Ireland. I have to lay these suggestions before the House. I think the poor people in the West of Ireland have a claim upon the House and upon the British community. I do not think you can solve the question without running some risk to the British Exchequer, but if you are not prepared to deal with it in the spirit I have suggested I would appeal to the Government to save their time and the time of the House by abandoning their proposals and putting off the consideration of this question to some future time.

(5.54.) MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I do not propose on the present occasion to follow at any length the hon. Member for East Mayo in the remarks he has made upon that portion of the Bill which deals with the congested districts. I think, however, the House must be grateful to the hon. Member, not only for the frankness of his criticisms on this part of the Government proposal, but also because, following the example of his leader, he has not been content with mere criticism, but has placed a plan of his own before the consideration of the House. I am quite sure that the plan will receive careful and serious consideration. There are many parts of it—I am speaking more particularly of the details which have been explained to us—that would commend themselves at once to both sides of the House. For instance, I think that all of us would approve of any scheme which could establish a cheap system of land registration and of land transfer, even if it applied only to this particular class of property. I think, also, that we could agree with the hon. Member that if something is to be done for these people—if, with the assistance of the State and of Parliament, they are to be placed in a better position—Parliament and the State have some right to make conditions in order to prevent the possibility of this part of the country going back to the state from which it has been rescued. Accordingly it would be wise to introduce stringent provisions against sub-letting, and against the disposal of the property, except under proper conditions. But I suppose that the crux of the hon. Member's plan is to be found in his proposal for the further fining down of rents, and this time the fining down is to be without compensation, because what I understood the hon. Member to propose is, that you should take rents in this part of the country—rents that are already "fair rents," having been revised by the judicial tribunal appointed for the purpose by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, rents first revised and then reviewed in consequence of the fall of prices—and that you should cut them down to eight years' purchase of the valuation. That, I suppose, would be about five years' purchase of the "fair rent." Of course, that is a very drastic proposal.

MR. DILLON: I am sorry to interrupt, but I did not propose anything of the sort. I proposed that the interest of these landlords in the West should be purchased at a valuation of that interest without reference to the rent. I said, only for the purpose of argument, that, as far as my knowledge goes, a fair price would roughly be eight years' purchase of the valuation. I may tell the right hon. Gentleman that in the West of Ireland recent Land Courts have reduced the rents to an average of 40 per cent. below Griffith's valuation.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: But you cannot consider this sort of transaction from the point of view of one side alone; and if a landlord is now getting about £100 a year for his property, he would think it very hard measure if he is to be asked to give his property up for a net sum of £500. This proposal is so drastic that it could not be justified unless the hon. Member is able to prove, as perhaps he may be able to prove, that the landlords in this part of Ireland are an unmitigated curse, and that in all their relations with their tenants they have shown an absolute neglect of the duties naturally belonging to the possession of property. I now pass to consider the earlier part of the hon. Member's speech. In the commencement he referred to the failure of past land legislation in regard to Ireland; and I think that he attributed it to the fact that Irish opinion had never been consulted with reference to it; the legislation which had been passed was in reality foreign legislation, and consequently it had been entirely unsuccessful. The hon. Member went on to complain that this course, taken in the past, was again going to be pursued by the Government—that we were again going to enter upon important legislation without consulting the Representatives of the Irish people, and without in any way consulting the Irish people themselves. I think an opinion of the same kind has already been expressed by some of my right hon. Friends. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian put, as his first vital objection to the Bill, that Irish assent was not asked to the propositions which it contained. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle, at Rochdale the other night, spoke with some severity of what he called the infatuation and blind conceit of the Unionist Party, who fancied that they knew more of this complex question of the Irish land than the Irish Members themselves, and that they were better able to find remedies than five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland. Let me say, in the first place, that I admit that there is great force in this contention. At any rate, one thing is clear, that if we have against us the hostility of five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland and of all the people they represent, not only will that in all likelihood very seriously hamper and delay the further progress of this Bill, but, what is of very much greater importance, it is likely to hamper the operation of the Bill when it is passed. That is clear. On the other hand, I say that the argument may very well be pressed too far. I think that my right hon. Friends, and perhaps the hon. Member behind me (Mr. Dillon), are too apt to forget that there is a minority in Ireland, and they are too ready to ignore the fact that its opinion is entitled to authority in proportion to its numbers. ["Hear, hear!"] You say "Hear, hear" in this House, but in the speeches to which I have been referring there has not been one word about this great minority of 2,000,000 of the Irish people, who certainly are not represented by those gentlemen whom we hear described as five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland; because everybody knows what is the electoral situation in Ireland. Everybody knows that, whereas in England and Scotland the minority is, on the whole, fairly represented according to its numbers, for what it loses in one district is made up in another, in Ireland that is not so, and the aggregate minority which cannot get representation means a very large proportion of the total electorate. So much is this so that at the last General Election 65 of the elected Representatives were returned by half of the constituencies of the country. Therefore, while I am willing to give all weight to the argument that this majority should be consulted, I contend that the minority have also a right to a hearing, and to a very respectful hearing. I say, further, that this majority with whom I am dealing have been shown by experience not always to represent even their own constituents on this question of land legislation. What is the experience of the Land Act of 1881? That Act was opposed by these same gentlemen, the Representatives of the same Party in Ireland. They gave it no support; their action in regard to it was hostile from beginning to end. When the Bill was passed it became necessary for my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian to put the hon. Member for Cork and some of his friends in prison to prevent them from interrupting the operation of the Act; and as soon as the hon. Member and his friends went to prison, then the peasants rushed forward to take advantage of the Act. [Mr. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear!] I will take up that ironical cheer. What does the hon. Gentleman mean? Does he mean to say that the tenants, in the absence of their recognised leaders, were induced to take a course which was not to their own interest? But, then, why did the hon. Gentleman and others cheer the hon. Member for South Hackney (Sir C. Russell) when he said that the Land Act of 1881 was the great charter of the Irish tenantry? Again I say that, although we ought to pay attention to the opinions which are expressed by the majority of the Representatives of Ireland, yet the opinion of those Representatives need not be, and ought not to be, the governing factor in the consideration of this case. That, I say, is one opinion, but it is not the opinion of my right hon. Friends. [An hon. MEMBER: It used to be your opinion.] I really cannot be diverted like this every moment, or I shall never get to the end of my task. I want to point out to the House that, at all events, my right hon. Friends the leaders of the English portion of the Opposition are committed to this view—that the assent of the majority of the Irish Members is the governing factor in this business—that their opinion is more valuable than ours; that it is a presumption on our part, as English Members, to have opinions on a purely Irish question, or to set them against the opinions of the majority of the Irish Members. But the other night, at the commencement of this debate, we had the privilege of hearing from the leader of the Irish people, from the leader of the Irish Party, who are five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland, a plan for the settlement of this question, a plan which was introduced as a complete and final solution. The hon. Member for East Mayo said of that proposal that it was a moderate and statesmanlike proposal, and that it was delivered to us by the only living man who had the power to settle the Irish land question. That remark was loudly cheered.

MR. DILLON: I added, "On those lines."

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That is a most remarkable qualification.

MR. DILLON: You will find the words in the *Times'* report of my speech.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: If the hon. Member puts in that qualification I accept his statement. But then see, in that case, what a very poor compliment it is to the hon. Member for Cork. You say of his scheme that he is the only person who can settle the question "on those lines," but you might say the same of any man who has proposed a scheme, though it were the most idiotic and senseless in the world. But I do not understand the hon. Member in that sense. I thought he meant to express his sense of the importance of this deliverance, and that his leader, the hon. Member for Cork, was among the best qualified persons to settle this question. But under those circumstances what a singular and extraordinary thing it is that this deliverance, this important speech, by the leader of the Irish Party, which represents the feelings and wishes of the Irish people and the opinions of five-sixths of their Representatives—that this deliverance is entirely ignored and put aside by my right hon. Friend the leader of the Opposition. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle said, at Rochdale, that the Unionist Party had been extremely scornful with reference to this plan, and had received it with ridicule and sneers. I do not know how my right hon. Friend came to that conclusion.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Unionist Press.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Ah! the Unionist Press. At any rate, it cannot be said of the Unionist Party in this House. Most certainly, for myself, whatever I might think of it I should not be disposed to put aside a plan of that kind from a man occupying the position of the hon. Member for Cork either with scorn or with sneering. But it is my right hon. Friends who are treating him with the most scant ceremony. Here is this plan, to which the utmost importance attaches, and the leader of the Opposition gives to its consideration—for I timed him by my watch—just two-and-a-half minutes. And then he said he did not understand it, or all its details.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Do you understand them all?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: My right hon. Friend puts me a tempting question—Do I understand them all? I am going to try and find out to-night. I am going to say what I do understand,

and the main principles of the scheme seem to me to be pretty simple. I go back now to my point, because I think it is an extremely important one. We ought to know what view the Members of the Opposition generally take of this proposal of the hon. Member for Cork. Do they adopt it? If they do, their opposition to the Bill is simplified very considerably, because then some of the main principles of the Bill before the House are accepted. If you adopt the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork you have to adopt two things which are most important—the principle of State aid, in the first place, and the principle of the hypothecation of local resources in the second place. Do you adopt these two principles? I ask some of my right hon. Friends to tell us, if they speak later in the debate. If they do not adopt them, then I want to know how they are going to defend themselves against a charge of infatuation and blindness, in presuming to think that they know more of the Irish land question than the Irish Members themselves. I wish now to come to what I think is the foundation of the opposition to as well as the support of the Bill—I mean the two principles to which I have referred as being equally at the bottom of the plan of the hon. Member for Cork and the plan of the Government—that is to say, State aid and hypothecation of local resources. It has been urged on behalf of the Government that State aid is consistent with all past legislation on the subject, and all past efforts of legislation. That is perfectly true. Then, I understand my right hon. Friends to say "although it is consistent with what we have done and said in the past, we consider that the General Election of 1886 made it impossible that that principle should be further developed." I also understand my right hon. Friends to charge some of us, myself among the number, with gross inconsistency, because they say our action in supporting this Bill is contrary to the speeches and to the pledges we gave at the time of the Election. My right hon. Friend says that he made no reference to them; but probably my right hon. Friend is not aware of the little correspondence that has been going on in the newspapers between my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby and myself. I know that my right hon. Friend is going to follow me in the debate, and therefore I am sure that he will excuse me if I anticipate a little what he may be going to say. My right hon. Friend has, I think, many virtues. He has one defect, however; he is under the unfortunate delusion that everybody is inconsistent except himself; and he seeks to prove that universal inconsistency by picking out from the multifarious speeches which many of us have made upon this and other questions isolated extracts, without the context, which are detached from the whole tenour and gist of the arguments which we used. If my right hon. Friend is going to make that charge to-night, I beg him, in the first place, to hear from me a statement as to what I have said on the subject, and then I defy, I challenge him to point to any speech I have ever delivered that is inconsistent with what I have said. In opposing the Land Bill of 1886 in this House I said that as far as I was concerned I had no objection to the use of State credit for Ireland provided that Ireland remained a part of the United Kingdom. I accepted the view of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian that England and Scotland had an obligation towards Ireland, that they were bound to take some risk and some burden on themselves, and the only objection which I took then upon this head was that I was unwilling to lend money to a country which you were going to place in the position of a self-governing colony. I remember using the illustration of Canada, and asking who there was who would lend British money in order to relieve the landlords of Canada of the risk of their occupation. When we came to the General Election I admit—and I have said so again and again in subsequent speeches—that, in my opinion, the electors declared themselves against any burden being placed on the British Exchequer. It is not my view or opinion; but I admit that I have said, and still believe, that that probably was, and probably is, the opinion of the electors. That is what I said, and I do not believe that any extract can be quoted in the slightest degree inconsistent with it. The question between us now as to inconsistency is to be decided by the answer to this question—Whether there is a burden on the British taxpayer under this Bill; and not only whether there is a burden, but whether there is a risk of burden? If there is the slightest fraction of risk, then I am inconsistent in supporting this Bill. But let us examine the question. What is the risk? In the first place, under this Bill you are going to reduce the rents of Ireland by a further 30 per cent. That gives, with the two previous reductions, about 60 or 60 per cent. below the Land Act of 1881. The hon. Member for Cork said the other day that a further reduction of 30 per cent. would make the rents fair rents. Then he would admit that they could be fair rents, and ought to be paid by the tenants. It is, therefore, clear that if the tenants are honest, and if there be no extraordinary and unprecented calamity, those rents can easily be paid. First, let us consider the question of unprecedented calamity. You are to suppose a further fall of prices, a further fall in the price of Stock, possibly of a more serious character than anything which has occurred previously. I say for that contingency the cash securities are ample. You have one-fifth reserved from the landlord; you have got 12 per cent. reserved from the tenant; you have the contribution from the Probate Duty and other contributions; so that altogether you have obtained a capitalised sum, which certainly secures you against any risk of an ordinary calamity. But you have to go further. Unfortunately, in Ireland you have to admit the impossible. You have to admit that those people who are to be so benefited and to receive such advantageous terms are going to be persuaded by the leaders of some future agitation to undertake a general repudiation. I say to myself that I do not believe that is possible. I do not believe it is possible, because I think that previous attempts have shown that a general repudiation cannot be accomplished. I do not believe it possible, also, because after all those tenants are shrewd people, and they have too much to lose. They would lose under this repudiation, not merely their instalments, but the whole of their tenant-right, which amounts in many cases to something like the equal of the freehold value of the land. I say, therefore, that although in certain cases I conceive that the leaders of a future agitation might, by the exercise of a sort of baleful influence, such as the present leaders have exercised—as in the case of New Tipperary, where men have been undoubtedly induced to ruin themselves by the persuasion of some hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway — although you may have cases of that kind of extravagant disinterestedness, yet I utterly disbelieve that you can obtain it throughout the whole of the country. But I say, for the sake of this argument, you have to assume that it would not be fair to rest upon the probabilities of the case. I have, in order to make my case good, to prove that the loss is impossible. It is not enough to say that it is so improbable as to be almost impossible. Coming to this point, I say that, supposing you have this general dishonesty, this extraordinary agitation, this readiness to sacrifice everything for the cause—supposing that you have a general repudiation, you have in your hands sufficient resources to bring you home without the loss of a penny. What have you to do? By the hypothecation of the local resources we practically capitalise a payment which we have contracted to make to the Irish Local Authorities. We are under a contract, under an obligation to pay to the Irish Local Authorities so much per annum. We capitalise this sum and hand it over for Irish purposes; and then we have a right to come upon the annual sum if there is any deficiency. I say then, in these circumstances, that you have got an absolute security, an inalienable security. I am told, "Oh, no, the remedy is so extraordinay that you cannot enforce it. If there were a repudiation, public opinion in this country and in Ireland would not justify the enforcement of our terms." Well, but I do not believe that is the case. In the first place, that argument is inconsistent with the previous policy of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, who in his Land Bill of 1886 proposed to hypothecate the national resources. It was not only the local resources, but the whole of the resources of the nation which were made responsible for the payment for Irish land; and accordingly, if there had been a general repudiation of rent, the Receiver General would have to stop out of the national resources an amount equivalent to the amount of rent. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle (Mr. Morley) has said that you cannot have lunatics running about the streets, or the children going about without education; but under the Bill of my right hon. Friend you might have had the whole machinery of Government brought to a standstill in the almost impossible contingency we are contemplating. If this is so you cannot object to the principle of hypothecation; and for my part it appears to me to be perfectly fair. Let us consider the case. You have got to assume, for the purpose of argument, that there is going to be a widespread and general dishonesty in Ireland. It must be supported by the public opinion throughout the whole of Ireland. It is said, "Oh, this Bill is only for the benefit of a limited class, and it would be unfair to punish the majority because of the failure of that limited class." Yes, Sir, but the majority are co-partners in the advantages to be derived. In the first instance, they benefit as part of the nation, if this Bill is successful, in settling the agrarian difficulty; and, in the second place, they would be *particeps criminis*, because you could not have a general repudiation of this kind on the part of one-fourth of the tenants unless they were supported by three-fourths of the public opinion of the country. It is only if there is the general opinion of the country in favour of dishonesty coincident with an act of dishonesty on the part of the tenants that this contingency would arise. In that case the British taxpayer would be justified in claiming from the Irish people the guarantee which he got, and claiming it to the last penny. My argument, then, is that we are free to adopt this principle of State assistance and the hypothecation of the local resources in order to guarantee any sum which may be borrowed. In adopting those principles we are convinced that they cannot by any possibility impose any risk of loss on the British taxpayer. For what are we to do this? For the plan of the Government or for the plan of the hon. Member for Cork? This is an important question. My right hon. Friend asked me if I understood all the details of that plan. Perhaps I may be described as a venturesome person, but I almost think that I do. The main features, it seems to me are perfectly simple, clear, and intelligible to a child. In the first place, you are to exclude from the operation of the Bill all tenancies above £50, and grazing land, which amounts to 45 per cent., and you have only to deal, therefore, with 55 per cent. Secondly, you are to reduce compulsorily—you are to force the landlords to reduce this 55 per cent. by 30 per cent. Thirdly, you are to compensate those landlords partially by lending to them money hypothecated upon Irish resources to the extent of 20 years' purchase for the deductions they are compelled to make, by lending it to them at 4 per cent., with which they are to pay off mortgages at 6 per cent., and the profit of 2 per cent. is to go in the reduction of the loss they would make. That is the plan of the hon Member. There is one remark I wish to make at the outset. It is a very unexpected proposal from the hon. Member for Cork—at all events unexpected by us who are not in his confidence. We have always understood that the hon. Member for Cork was of opinion that the rents in Ireland at the present time were still extortionate rents. Of course, that is not the opinion of the majority of the House. Again and again the hon. Member for Cork and his friends have denounced evictions for the purpose of procuring these rents, which we are told are extorted from a reluctant and unfortunate peasantry. If that is their opinion, is it not strange that the hon. Member should seek to compensate the landlords for making reductions which in equity they ought to make without any compensation at all? "Is Saul also among the Prophets?" Has the hon. Member for Cork joined the Landlords' Convention? [Mr. W. O'Brien: You have joined it.] I can understand the hon. Member for Cork saying, "Rents are too high, and the landlords ought to reduce them without compensation; but as they do not do so, and as it is most important in the interests of social order that they should be reduced, I am willing to make sacrifices in order to relieve them from the loss from compulsory reduction." The other points to which I have to make reference in the hon. Member for Cork's scheme are more practical. The House will see that the hon. Member's scheme depends upon an average estimate he has made of the condition of estates in Ireland. He assumes three things. In the first place, he estimates that on an average 55 per cent. of the land is under £50 valuation. He estimates in the second place that all estates in Ireland are mortgaged, and in the third place that the mortgage in every case is at 6 per cent. Then he goes on to make what I believe to be the curious mistake of applying a general average as though it were applicable to every individual case. I wish to point out to the hon. Member that if you change any one of these factors you will change the whole operation of the scheme. The scheme is based upon the assumption that 55 per cent. of the estates are below £50 valuation. The hon. Member makes a calculation by which he shows that the landlord, under his proposals, ought to receive £31. I have worked it out, and I make it £30 2s., but it does not much matter. Under the hon. Member's scheme the landlord would gain £31 as against £27 10s., which he would have under the Bill. That is quite true; but if the proportion of lands under £50 valuation were 75 per cent., which I undertake to say it is on a great number of estates, then, instead of the landlord gaining £3 10s. or £2 10s., he would lose £1. He would get £26 or £27 instead of £31. Then the assumption is that all estates in Ireland are mortgaged. But there are a certain number which are not mortgaged, and what are you going to do in the case of these? Are you going to lend money to the landlord that he may speculate on the Stock Exchange to enable him to make 6 per cent., for unless he makes 6 per cent. he does not make the profit the hon. Member intends to give him. Some gentlemen, I know, have not a penny mortgage upon their estates; it is no use offering them money to play ducks and drakes with, or in order that they may lay it out in Consols at 3 per cent.; they would lose by such a loan. Take the third assumption, the question of the interest on the mortgage. The hon. Member says the landlord would have 2 per cent. profit, because he would borrow at 4 per cent. and pay 6 per cent. But suppose he pays 5 per cent.? I always understood that the rate at which mortgages were carried out on land, in Ireland at all events, until the recent bitterness, was 5 per cent., and in some cases where the mortgage was small it was even less. At any rate, any variation of the interest alters the calculation. These are practical difficulties, but I do not put them forward as fatal to the scheme of the hon. Member. If you adopt his scheme as a final and complete solution you will have a solution which is not uniform, which varies in every different case, and which does not present proper guarantees for finality. The hon. Member told us that the scheme of the Government dealt only with one-quarter of the tenants of Ireland. But at least it deals with that fourth completely, and settles the question so far as they are concerned. The hon. Member proposes to deal with only one-half of the land of Ireland, and to deal with that incompletely. I think it would be much more easy to extend and develop and complete the scheme of the Government than the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork. The hon. Member has excluded from the benefit of his scheme 45 per cent. of the tenants. Does he think they are going to remain satisfied while their neighbours are having a reduction of 30 per cent. in rent? Does he imagine that a man having a farm valued at £55 a year will remain satisfied to pay that amount when his neighbour gets a reduction of £15 a year? The thing cannot last a moment; if you draw a broad and definite line there must be dissatisfaction on the one side or the other. Consider the case of the tenant who gets a reduction: in that case, is it absolutely certain that we shall have reached a final and absolute settlement? What reason have we to believe that tenants who have got, by successive stages, infinitely more than was asked for them by reformers of the past, like Mr. Butt, and who are still discontented—is it reasonable to suppose that they will be contented when you have taken another slice off the cake of the land? In one of his speeches the hon. Member for Cork said that he did not believe in any scheme so long as a chance remained of friction in consequence of the conflicting interests of landlord and tenant. Under these circumstances I cannot regard the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork as complete or final, I cannot regard it as a scheme which could be safely substituted for the plan of the Government. The Government have offered, by the mouth of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to include the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork in the Bill. Is it well to jeer at an offer of that kind made by way of concession? The hon. Member for Cork made an appeal to the House that this matter might be discussed without Party feeling. I have treated it in that light. I think the Government made the offer without Party feeling; they made an offer which many hon. Members behind must have thought not only extremely liberal, but perhaps a little unwise. But I am dealing with matters as they stand; that offer has been made, and I am bound to say that there are some advantages in accepting it. If you put the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork side by side with the Bill, you would extend the area and scope of the Bill. Undoubtedly, with your resources, you would be able to do more than under the scheme of the Bill as it stands. You would do more; you would give a double option to the landlords. Many landlords may refuse to sell under the Bill—I am speaking of good landlords, who may refuse to sell because they do not desire to break up old associations with the country in which their forefathers lived and died—those landlords are just the people who might be glad if an option of this kind were given to take the opportunity to fine down their rents. Therefore, it seems to me there might be provided an alternative settlement which might be preferred in some cases to settlement under the scheme of the Government. Although I would not substitute it for the Government scheme, yet I think the plan of the hon. Member might be adopted as a concurrent plan. I am told that the hon. Member is said to have informed a news agency—though I do not place credence on this—that he regarded the offer of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a trap, and that the scheme of the Government would edge out and choke up his plan altogether, and that it would be a mere farce to introduce the two plans in one Bill. I take it that the hon. Member believes the offer of the Government to be honestly made, and I do not believe that he thought there was any attempt to catch him in a trap. If he thinks there is any fear that the funds at the disposal of the authorities under this scheme would, without special provisions, be devoted entirely to one of the alternative schemes, it would be possible to put into the Bill something which would provide that a portion of the funds should be devoted to carrying out the hon Member's scheme. That would be consistent with the offer of the Government, and a proof of their good faith and intention that both schemes should run side by side. I have said I want to discuss this without Party feeling. I want to see whether it may not be possible to make some further concessions, or to go some distance further to meet the opposition declared against the Bill. In the first place, it seems to me, we might give further consideration to the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork to limit the operation of this Bill to estates under £50. There is nothing in the proposal which is hostile to the principle of the Bill, because the Bill provides a limit already, only it is a limit of £5,000. Though I admit the difficulty of drawing a fast line, I do not myself think it would be undesirable to still further limit that maximum; and I think especially a provision might be made that in those estates in which tenancies of a larger valuation form a large proportion, that there, at all events, the estate might be divided, and only that portion purchased which consisted of smaller properties. In that way I think we might get the practical result of the suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork. But there is one other point of very much greater importance. It is the objection which the hon. Member took to the hypothecation of the resources of the Local Authorities without their consent. I think the Government themselves will admit that this was a very strong thing to do. You have only got to test it by considering what would be the result of applying it to England or Scotland. What would be said if you were to mortgage the resources of the great municipalities of Great Britain without consulting them as to the employment which should be made of those funds? I do not hesitate to say there would be a pretty kettle of fish if anything of the sort were attempted. I admit, therefore, the objection of the hon. Member impressed me most strongly. I think it is a very serious objection, and coupled with it comes the objection of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian—namely, that we were putting the country into the position of State landlords. Well, Sir, I agree that if you put the British Government into direct communication with the Irish tenant, and make the British Government the rent-collector, you are paving the way for very considerable friction and irritation, and possibly even danger. Now, in reference to this matter my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian paid me the greatest compliment I have ever received in my life. He quoted some language attributed to me in a pamphlet by the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn. He said this language was inaccurate and untruthful, and went on to say under these circumstances nothing ever would induce him to believe I had said it. That was a great compliment, which I accept in all humility. I think it is very much for the right hon. Gentleman, after his experience, to be able to say of me he has so much confidence in my general truthfulness and accuracy that he cannot believe that, under any circumstances, or in a particular case, I could have used these words. I hope I shall justify that good opinion. The passage which was attributed to me by the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn, although quoted without the context, is a passage which I adopt and admit. Those words were used by me in describing the Bill of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, and I hope I shall be able to show him they were perfectly accurate. Now, what was the provision which my right hon. Friend made in his Bill? He proposed that the rents of Ireland, after the transfer had taken place, should be collected by sub-receivers or rent-collectors, who were to be appointed and paid by the Irish Parliament; that those sub-receivers and rent-collectors were to pay the rents into the hands of the Receiver-General, who was to take the proper amount for the instalments and interest, and hand back the balance to the Irish Parliament.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: No.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Well, will my right hon. Friend correct me?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: He was to pay them into a general fund, which was to include all Irish receipts whatever, and to take out of that fund whatever was due to the British Government, and he was to take no cognizance of rents at all.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Quite so. I quite understand, and I am sorry I did not make it clear. The Receiver-General had no cognizance of rents; all he had cognizance of was the debt to the British Exchequer, and out of the fund in his hand he had not merely to pay the debt for instalments and Sinking Fund, but also to pay for the proportion of Ireland in respect of the military expenditure and the interest on the loan. Now, I want the House to follow. Suppose there were an agitation in Ireland of the kind suggested in reference to this Bill, a general dishonesty, a general repudiation, a general determination not to pay rents. The people who were influencing the tenants in order to get them to adopt a general repudiation would have at least an equal influence upon the Irish Parliament, or the people who elect the Irish Parliament. What would be easier than for the Irish Parliament to give orders to the receivers, who were their servants, whom they would pay, not to collect a penny of the rents? Where, then, would you be? That was the case I was contemplating in the speech in which I said the British Government will be the landlords of Ireland, and in that case they will have to proceed to collect the rents which the Irish Parliament will not collect, and collect them at the point of the bayonet. My right hon. Friend may say, "No, that would not be necessary, because the Receiver-General would have the whole resources of Ireland in his hands." But how do the resources come into his hands? They would come into his hands through the tax-collectors who were appointed and paid by the Irish Parliament.

MR. J. MORLEY: By the law of Ireland.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: "The law of Ireland!" Well, that is an idea. They are appointed by the Irish Parliament, or some official of the Irish Parliament, and they are absolutely under the control of the Irish Parliament, and, under the circumstances I have named, it would be just as easy for the Irish Parliament to pass a Resolution ordering these tax-collectors not to pay to the Receiver General as to order the receivers of rent not to collect the rents, and, therefore, I say that, in my opinion, I was strictly correct and accurate in the language which I used. I felt bound to say on what ground and in what view I used this language, and I confess I cannot see that in using it I have deviated in the slightest degree from the strictest accuracy. After all, the important part is this, and here I admit the case of my right hon. Friend against me. He says, "When you were discussing my Bill you condemned State landlordism—what are you going to say about this?" I say that my objection to the Bill of 1886 holds in part, though not quite in the same degree, to the proposals in this Bill. I say in part and not in the same degree because we have got for the first time the hypothecation of local resources. In the Bill of my right hon. Friend I could not see, and I never have seen, any possible alternative in the case of repudiation of rent, except the reconquest of the country by arms, but under this Bill, if there were this general repudiation, we have got the right to stop the payments to the Local Authorities, and we are, therefore, absolutely safe. But, although that makes the objection less strong and less vital, it still leaves, in my mind, the objection which I took against the Bill of my right hon. Friend. I do not think it is safe; I think it will tend to provoke irritation and friction if you have the British authority in close communication with the Irish tenant. And now I come to my point—is it not possible for us to go further to meet my right hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Cork? The hon. Member for Cork claimed that the assent of the Local Authority should be given, or, failing that, that the consent of the majority of the Irish Representatives should be asked. Why should not we ask the assent of the Local Authority? [AN IRISH MEMBER: We have got none.] Quite true, and I do not suppose it would satisfy hon. Members below the Gangway if the Grand Jury were inserted. But the Government are pledged to bring in a Local Government Bill. Do you doubt they mean to carry out that promise? But they do. It has often struck me before how very ridiculous hon. Members below the Gangway sometimes make themselves. There are hon. Members below the Gangway who want this Local Government Bill, but who do not believe the Government are serious in wishing to bring it in, who think they would be glad of any excuse for delay, and yet they are actually playing into the hands of the Government by doing everything they can to make impossible the production of this Bill which they desire. If we were to agree upon this Bill, and clear it out of the way, there is no reason why the Local Government Bill should not be brought in this Session and passed this Session. I confess I should have thought it a question of elementary politics, if hon. Members desire to discuss the Local Government Bill, to give every assistance to get all other business out of the way. Whether the Local Government Bill is brought in this year or next year, we are told by the Government it is to assimilate in the main the system in Ireland to the system in England and Scotland, and, therefore, it is not a very great assumption to suppose it will contain provisions for County Councils. Now, I want to ask the Government to consider this point. May it not be possible to give an assurance on this matter, if by giving an assurance they can in any way promote the general policy of this Bill? I do not say they ought to make concessions to gentlemen who only receive them with jeers, and who treat them as a trap into which they are to fall; but if there be, on the part of hon. Members below the Gangway and right hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway, any desire to deal with this question without relation to Party politics, then I want to ask the Government whether they cannot consider this great concession; whether they cannot say that when the County Councils are established in Ireland they shall have a voice in the negotiations which will take place in regard to the transfer of land; that they shall have a veto over those transactions; that they shall have an interest in their success and a portion of the sum which will be received from the tenant in the shape of rent; that they shall become the landlord; and that their duties shall be confined to paying over to the British Exchequer that portion of the rent which belongs to the British Exchequer for the instalments. Just let us see what are the advantages of this plan. In the first place you get rid of the communication between the Government and the tenant. The Irish authority, which is the landlord, will have assented to the purchase. The Irish authority will have the profit, and if the profit which the Government have allotted be not sufficient, I think it would be very easy to increase that profit; because it does appear to me to be a very strong thing to offer to the tenant, as a temptation to become the owner of his land, not only an immediate reduction of 20 per cent., but five years hence a further deduction of 12 per cent. I would reserve that 12 per cent. to the Local Authorities, and in that case you would have this large profit for the Local Authority which would belong to all the ratepayers, so that all the ratepayers would be benefited alike, and not merely this limited and privileged class. That is a proposal which I press upon the attention of the Government. Now, let us consider what is the objection to it. There is only one objection I have ever heard made to this proposal, and that is that if you were to put it in the hands of the Local Authority the Local Authority would be in the hands of the National League, and the National League would have power over their operations, and might stop them at any time and in any district in which they desired to do so. There is no doubt that is a danger, and it is just as well to look it in the face; but I do not believe it is so dangerous as is supposed. In the first place I would point out that if the National League has this influence over the Local Authority, they have pretty nearly the same influence now over the tenants, and what the National League would then get the Local Authority to do they could now get the tenants to do. The result would be very much the same. But my main reason for not attaching importance to this objection is that I do not believe that even the National League could carry out a system of this kind against the will of the tenants over the whole of Ireland. They might be able to do it here and there; but I think if they did they would run a great risk of destroying whatever authority they previously possessed; and I am perfectly certain that if they attempted to do it all over Ireland, and if you suppose, as we do suppose, the tenants would be desirous of purchasing, the attempt would break down, just as the No-rent manifesto broke down, and as other attempts to interfere with the proceedings to which the tenants were committed have broken down. Now, Sir, I have suggested this Amendment as bearing upon the speech of the hon. Member for Cork, who distinctly asked that if the local resources were to be hypothecated the Local Authority should be consulted. But just let us see, if we came to an agreement on this point, how it would meet the objections of my right hon. Friend. I venture to say that it meets at once three out of four vital objections of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). It meets the objection that Irish assent is not asked; it meets the objection that the State would be the landlord; and it meets the objection that the tenant would be under coercion, because I suppose it would be admitted that the Local Authority would be able to protect him against abuse on the part of the landlord. Then what remains of my right hon. Friend's vital objections is the objection to the use of State credit. As regards that I venture to say, in the presence of my right hon. Friend, that that is not his personal objection. That is an objection he takes in deference to what he believes to have been the opinion of the constituencies at the last General Election. He told us in his speech the other night that he still considers the British people, being responsible for much that is going on in Ireland, owe an obligation to that country which they ought to meet. I may, therefore, with regard to this last objection of my right hon. Friend put into his mouth the words of Prior—

> " In the dispute, whate'er I said,
> " My heart was by my tongue belied;
> " And in my looks you might have read
> " How much I argu'd on your side."

Now, Sir, I hope I have treated the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork fairly. I hope I have followed the injunction given, not only by the hon. Member for Cork, but also by my right hon. Friend, to those who should succeed them, to speak in this matter without Party feeling. I desire, and I have expressed again and again in public a desire, that this question should be taken out of Party politics. Is there any question which can come before this House which is less a question for virulent Party controversy than the Irish land question? Why, we are all agreed, at all events, on some of the principles involved in this matter. We are all agreed—even the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), who now puts forward an alternative scheme, is agreed—in favour of the great extension of peasant proprietorship. We are all agreed that this alteration must be carried out in some way or another, with or without the assistance of the State—I do not now say by what method. I believe I may say we are all agreed on the principle of the hypothecation of Irish resources; because the hon. Member for Cork has given his adhesion, and my right hon. Friends on these benches will, of course, accept his view so far as it relates to a purely Irish question. I say, then, we are all agreed as to some of the main principles, but that is not all. We want to get this question out of the way. The interests of all parties point in the same direction. The Home Rulers want to get it out of the way because they say it will clear the way for an Irish Parliament. We want to get it out of the way because we say that when the land difficulty is settled we do not believe there will be any need for an Irish Parliament. You may think we are wrong, as we think you are wrong; but let us come to an issue. Is it not true that the real interests of Irishmen are involved in a settlement of this question? Is it not true that these national interests are greater than Party interests, and that they are intimately concerned in the immediate settlement of this question? Is it not desirable, is it not possible, in these circumstances, to make some concessions, some sacrifices it may be, to secure an arrangement which will be a national and not a Party settlement, and which, because it is a national settlement, will have an infinitely greater chance of having a permanent and beneficial effect?

(7.8.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I have listened with great interest and attention to the speech of my right hon. Friend. I think the House will have felt that he was skating on thin ice, and that he performed the figure of 8 with that agility and skill he usually displays. I could not help asking myself during his speech this question—is this speech a speech in favour of the Second Reading of this Bill, or is it a speech against it? What is it we are discussing here to-night? Is it the speech and plan of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), or the speech and plan of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain)? I have no objection to discuss and debate a plan of land purchase by my right hon. Friend. I have spent many weeks and months of my life in discussing many of his land purchase plans. They have all been ingenious and remarkable, but they have all been different. I have heard a new plan from him to-night with great interest and instruction. When he puts it in the form of a Bill and proposes it for Second Reading I shall be very glad to discuss it in this House. But there was one thing my right hon. Friend hardly discussed to-night at all, and that was the Bill of Her Majesty's Government. He was very full of the plan of the hon. Member for Cork. Well, that is not before us. I have not heard that the Government have incorporated it in their Bill, nor that they are prepared to incorporate the plan of my right hon. Friend. If they are prepared to incorporate both I think the best thing they can do is to withdraw this Bill and bring in another. My right hon. Friend made a good many objections which he said were fatal to the plan of the hon. Member for Cork. He said it did not settle the question, because it proposed only to deal with estates under £50, and he proceeded in the latter part of his speech to propose that the Government should confine their Bill to estates under £50.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I did not say that. I said that although I saw great difficulty in making any limitation, I thought the limitation of the Government might be further reduced, especially in the case of certain classes of estates.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I understood my right hon. Friend to adopt the plan and the figure of the hon. Member for Cork.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: No.

SIR W. HARCOURT: And I am not surprised, because among the many plans which I have had the honour of discussing with my right hon. Friend was one for limiting purchases under £30 rental. But of all the things my right hon.

Friend has said, the most important and the one in which I most entirely concur with him is that it is impossible to work this Bill or any other plan of land purchase until you have established a system of Local Government in Ireland through which you may obtain the consent of the Irish people, and under which you may work the plan of land purchase through and by the Irish people. That is the position we have always taken up with reference to land purchase. That was the policy of 1886. You may differ from us. I will not quarrel with my right hon. Friend as to what should be the character of that Local Government. He would not go so far in the powers of that Local Government as we propose to go. I will not enter into that. I take this fundamental position: that you cannot hypothecate Irish funds, you cannot deal with Irish rents, except with the consent of the people and through the agency of Local Government. That is the basis which my right hon. Friend accepts. I accept it too; but then what is the conclusion from that? That you cannot go a step in this matter until you have let us see and know what is your plan of Local Government. Why surely my right hon. Friend is too good a man of business to suppose that we are going to vote this £33,000,000 of money which is to be raised upon British credit and in respect of which all the local resources of Ireland are to be hypothecated, without our knowing what the Local Government, which is to be the guarantor of the money, is to be. Of all proposals that is certainly one to buy a pig in a poke. I never heard of so absurd a proposal as that we are to pass the Second Reading of this Bill without knowing what the new Local Government of Ireland is to be. Therefore, of all the declarations that have been made none can be more important than that which was made by my right hon. Friend to-night. My right hon. Friend desires that this question shall be discussed without Party spirit. I am ready to meet him in that; but what I say is that before you can deal with the land purchase question you must first settle the principle of the Local Government of the country. That is the very root of the argument of my right hon. Friend. It is the central principle upon which everything else rests, and therefore let us go to work at once and settle what the Local Government of Ireland is to be. We, however, in this House of Commons cannot treat the Bill of Her Majesty's Government, I will not say with the contempt, but with the indifference which has been shown towards it by my right hon. Friend. After all, there is a Government, and the Government have a Bill, although my right hon. Friend has said nothing about it except in disparagement of it; but we are discussing its Second Reading, and I must regard it as existent as long as it is upon the Orders of the Day. Therefore, although my right hon. Friend challenges us, and indeed almost taunts us, into putting the Government Bill aside in order to discuss the proposals of the hon. Member for Cork and of himself, merely from Parliamentary decency I would ask leave to say a word upon the Bill of the Government as it stands before us. I will not enter into the controversy which my right hon. Friend invites us, I may almost say taunts us, to plunge into, because, even when he is in his most conciliatory mood, my right hon. Friend always mixes with his oil a little vinegar, so as to make the salad of his speeches agreeable to the palate. The right hon. Gentleman has to-night shown the qualities he always displays. He is an amiable character, and he has proffered himself as the godfather of bantlings that very often are not avowed by their putative fathers, and he is ready to promise and vow anything in the names of the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork, of the plan of Her Majesty's Government, and even of his own plan, as long as the principle of land purchase in Ireland bears his own hallmark. The only thing in the course of my right hon. Friend's speech that was not condemnatory of the Government Bill was something he thought it necessary to say in justification of his own consistency. I do not, I confess, exactly know what my right hon. Friend's present position is in the matter; but he appeared to complain that in a certain brief correspondence which we have had I affirmed the cardinal principle to be that the credit of the British Exchequer was not to be placed at risk. Well, I do not understand that he denies that that is the position, although I admit that he is perfectly consistent, because in all the discussions, public or private, that have passed between my right hon.

Friend and myself, the great claim he has put forward as the merit of his own scheme has been that it would not pledge English credit. But the right hon. Gentleman says to-night, "I admit that British credit is at risk in the Bill of the Government." And yet he claims to be consistent. My right hon. Friend has made several very important statements to-night. He has made one statement of which I think the House and the country should take note, and that is that the electorate of Great Britain, at the last Election declared against pledging British credit, although he says that that was not his opinion, nor was it the opinion of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. Now, I want to ask, Is British credit pledged in this Bill, and is the British Treasury at risk under it? I think I shall be able to show that there is no other credit at risk under this Bill, and that the whole risk falls, and must fall, upon the British taxpayer. That is the direct issue I take with my right hon. Friend, and, if I persuade him of that, then he admits he will be inconsistent in supporting the Second Reading of this Bill. What is the professed object of the Bill? It professes to solve the Irish agrarian question, and thereby also to get rid of the political difficulties between England and Ireland. It is supposed that you are to achieve those ends by buying out the landlords in Ireland, and by putting an end to dual ownership, which is assumed to be a great evil. I have often observed in politics that what are laid down as axioms are generally fallacies, and I myself have never accepted the proposition that dual ownership is necessarily an evil. I am not singular in holding that opinion. I have seen a letter from the Marquess of Waterford, and I have read speeches of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh, in which dual ownership is held to be a very good thing, and is asserted to be the only tenure which has been successful in Ireland, and upon which all the reforms of the Irish Land Law have hitherto been based. Dual ownership is an excellent tenure in many countries of Europe. John Stuart Mill considered that in Tuscany and elsewhere dual ownership was a good thing. Dual ownership is a good thing when there are good dual owners fairly dealing the one by the other, and the failure of it in Ireland is in consequence of the manner in which it has been worked in that country. What you propose by this Bill is to get rid of dual ownership. What does that mean? You are going to buy out the Irish landlords. You are going to get rid of the English Garrison. We have heard harsh language used about the landowners of Ireland; but was there ever such a condemnation of them as a class as the proposal under this Bill to get rid of them altogether? Can anything more harsh be said of these Irish landlords than that they, having had the welfare of the Irish people at their mercy for three centuries, have so misused their powers and have so abused their privileges that the first condition, in your opinion, for the restoration of peace and prosperity in Ireland must be the expropriation of their class? That is the real meaning of the proposal in this Bill to get rid of dual ownership in Ireland, and it is the most severe censure that has ever been passed upon the landlords of Ireland. It is said that the Irish landlords themselves are willing to go, and that the only question they are likely to raise is how many years' purchase they are to get for their land, and that if they get enough the English Garrison are willing to evacuate the fort. You may attempt to solve the agrarian question by this Bill; but you will be entirely mistaken if you think you will solve the political question by it. I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite cherish the belief that the only question in Ireland is the land question; that there is no national question behind it; and that there is no desire on the part of the Irish people for self-government. We on this side of the House, however, think differently. It seems to me that this Bill puts forward this great scheme something in the style of a quack medicine advertisement, or of the prospectus of a bubble company. The proposal of the Government is to cure all diseases, and is going to give everybody everything out of nothing. The tenant is to have his rent 20 per cent. lower; the landlord is to sell with the greatest facility property for which there has been no sale; while the British taxpayer, who is to go bail for them all, is to have no burden whatever thrown upon him. I have never seen the prospectus of a bubble company which promised more. For my part, I am only playing the humble part of an accountant who desires to investigate the nature of the securities upon which the whole proposal is based and of the liabilities which are to be incurred in carrying it out. Let us look for a moment at these securities, which appear so satisfactory to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Chamberlain). The first great beneficiary under this Bill is to be the tenant, who is to pay 20 per cent. less rent than he does at present, and to enable that object to be attained the local funds of Ireland and the Imperial Treasury of Great Britain are to be pledged. Either the rents are 20 per cent. too high or they are not. If they are 20 per cent. too high it is the landlord who ought to reduce them, and they ought not to be reduced by pledging the resources either of Great Britain or Ireland. But if they are not 20 per cent. too high, why are we to pledge the resources of Ireland and the funds of England in order to give a limited class of tenants, only one-fourth of the tenants of Ireland, land at a rent which is 20 per cent. below the fair value? Why are we to give the Irish tenant any more than the English tenant land at a rent below its real value, and for that purpose to pledge — what? Not his resources, but the resources of the whole community. You are going to substitute the English State for the landlord in Ireland. Then at least let the English State have a fair rent, neither a rent that is too high nor a rent that is too low. You say that you have introduced this Bill to settle the land question of Ireland; but will this Bill do it? You provide a scheme under which one-fourth of the tenants of Ireland, at the very most, will be dealt with. That is no settlement at all; it is an unsettlement of everything that exists at present. You have now a settlement upon the basis of judicial rent, determined by a Court which applies to all the tenants of Ireland. Your Bill creates by the side of the judicial rent another rent, which is to be 20 per cent. below the judicial rent. Thus you overthrow absolutely the existing settlement, and introduce a new one which deals only with one-fourth of the tenants. What are you going to do with the other three-fourths? They will be more discontented than ever; they will be more the prey of agitators than ever; and they will be discontented for the best possible reasons. Pass your Bill, and it will give rise to new and extended demands which you will not be able to resist, because you have no argument to adduce against them. What will the tenants who have not bought say to the landlords who have not sold? The tenants will say, "You must sell, or we will not pay you rent. There is no reason in the world why we should pay 20 per cent. more than our favoured neighbours." Then there will be the mortgagee, who will say, "The mortgagee of the adjacent property has got his money out of the fund provided by Government. I want my money, and you must sell in order that I may get it." Therefore in the long run the sale of properties must become compulsory, and what will be the consequence? You have taken £33,000,000 to deal with one-fourth of the tenants, and if it is absolutely necessary, in the circumstances, as I say it is, that you should deal with the remainder, it is plain that you must have three times that amount in addition to the sum already taken, and the liability for these subsequent millions must rest, without even the pretence of any interposition, upon the British Exchequer. You say you will obtain great benefit by making these tenants freeholders; but if I read your Bill aright, you do not make them freeholders in any sense of the word. For half a century they will only be tenants, tenants under inspection, men paying instalments, who, if those instalments fail, can be evicted at any moment. In the 21st clause of the Bill you will find the conditions laid down under which these men, whom you choose to call owners, can be compelled to leave their homes. In examining this Eldorado scheme, under which everybody is to pick up gold, let us consider where the gold is to come from. Unquestionably a great bonus is offered by the Bill. I will not discuss who is to get the lion's share of it. In my opinion, it will sometimes be the landlord; sometimes it may be the tenant. But I want to know where the money is coming from. Only one thing is a certainty, namely, that the landlord is to get money for his land which he cannot get now, and the sum which the landlords are to get you compute at present at £33,000,000. This money is to be paid to people who may, and probably will, take it out of Ireland, and I wonder how that is going to improve the condition of the country. This is a heavy price to pay to get rid of the class whom you treat, and perhaps rightly treat, as the men who are the curse of Ireland. Let us see what is thought of your securities by the landlords. You create a land stock, and you also provide that if the landlords do not like the land stock they may have Consols. Why is that? Because they do not trust your land stock security. If it were good for anything, your land stock would stand at a higher price than Consols. It is because it is known that your land security is not good that the landlords are given the choice of Consols, and they would be great fools if they did not choose Consols. You may wrap it up in whatever verbiage you like; but this is a plan by which the English Treasury—that is to say, the British taxpayer—is going to buy Irish land to the extent of £33,000,000 sterling at a price which cannot be obtained in the market, and to receive in respect of that land rent less by 20 per cent. than it at present yields. A pretty commercial land transaction for the English Treasury and the English taxpayer to be involved in. Prudent people are sometimes apt to make it a condition in settlements, or in their wills, that trust money shall not be put into Irish land; but here are the Trustees of the English nation, of the taxpayers, about to invest tens of millions, and ultimately hundreds of millions, of English money in the purchase of land which they know not to be marketable. You say you have ample security. What is it? The first security, of course, is the land, and you are going to begin by advancing on the land four-fifths or nearly the whole of the value. Who would lend four-fifths of the value upon English land? Here upon Irish land you begin your transactions by advancing four-fifths of the value, in spite of the agrarian, the social, and the political condition of Ireland. To use a technical phrase, I believe it is correct to say you are going to buy Irish land on the 2¾ per cent. table, when you know perfectly well that ordinary transactions in that land would be upon the 5 or 6 per cent. table, if you were to buy land in the market at all. The recoupment of this money is to be extended over 50 years—over half a century in which you will have to encounter the vicissitudes of seasons and the chances of political change; and you have left no margin upon the land itself. A famine may come, and the landlords who have not sold must reduce their rent because they cannot collect it. Do you think the English State, standing side by side with these landlords who have not sold, can collect the rent of land? Of course it cannot; and if it cannot it falls back upon the securities which lie behind. And I ask the House to consider what those securities are. I say that, taking the land itself, it is an absolutely insufficient security; no man can pretend that the land we propose to buy is a security for the money; and you admit that, because you set to work to reinforce it by security after security which you pile one upon the other. It is like children on the seashore building one wall of sand around another until a wave comes and they all disappear. Under your Bill you may call the State either a creditor or a landlord; in fact, the State would be both. And what State? It is the English State. I was quite surprised the other night to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer say it did not signify whether it was the English State or the Irish State, and that it was all the same thing. I confess I thought that argument was not worthy of the high intelligence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This rent will have to be collected by the English State which exists in Ireland only by the sword and under a *régime* of coercion. That is to be the rent-collector of Ireland. A hundred years ago would the Chancellor of the Exchequer have said it did not signify who collected the Tea Duty in Boston—whether it was collected by the State of Massachusetts or by the English Government? Why, it makes all the difference whether you are going to collect rent by an authority which enjoys the confidence of and acts in sympathy with the people, or whether you put the rent collection in the hands of an authority which is hated by the people. What is your case? Your case is that agrarian troubles in Ireland have been caused by political agitation. If that has been so in the past, is it not going to be so in the future? You say, as the Commission said, that the object of the Land League was to get rid of the English Garrison; and you are going to buy out the English Garrison. When the English Garrison has evacuated, the English creditor will stand in the place of the English Garrison. Why, then, should not political agitators use exactly the same arguments against the English Treasury that they used against the English Garrison, if they are actuated by political motives and seek political objects? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said he could not believe that such a course would be pursued, and he thought that nothing like a strike against rent would be attempted in this case. Really his memory sometimes fails him. I do not desire to fix him with a *tu quoque;* but I find a passage in which, speaking of the Ashbourne Act, he said—

> "If the expense of this transaction is gradually increased, and if the number of debtors to the State become very large, nothing would be easier than for agitators at some favourable time or after a bad harvest to bring about a strike against the payment of interest just as they have brought about a strike against the payment of rent."

That is a very real fear, and several Members have used the same argument that the collection of rent will be endangered by political agitation. But, says the right hon. Member, that will be against the self-interest of the purchasers, and therefore you may rely upon them. Well, it is your case that the Plan of Campaign has been against the interest of the tenants; and yet they have pursued it. My right hon. Friend referred to the case of New Tipperary. Why, there men have suffered eviction and have sacrificed their homes and their fortunes to carry out objects that they thought were great and worthy objects; and they have sacrificed that self-interest on which my right hon. Friend relies with so much confidence for the security of this £33,000,000 of English money. Where will your £33,000,000 be when the English Treasury is called upon to evict the Irish tenants? Why do you not anticipate that there may be a Plan of Campaign against the British Treasury? Why do you not anticipate that when you have land thrown upon your hands it may be boycotted in the market? If your story is true that these agrarian questions are really raised for political motives it is just as likely to be true in the future as it has been in the past. There was a Roman Emperor who wished the people had but one neck in order that he might strike at all with one blow; and here you offer to political agitation a single neck in the form of the British Treasury. As my right hon. Friend said, local Government lies at the root of the whole question. You cannot settle this land question until you make a political peace with Ireland. Until you have political peace you will have no agrarian peace; until you have political and agrarian peace you cannot deal with this question of land purchase in Ireland with any security, nor can you advance money from the British Treasury unless it is secured, not by paper security, but by the constancy and the loyalty of a friendly people. Therefore, I take this principle as lying at the root of the whole matter—the consent of the nation through its Local Government and its National Representatives and the political peace to be brought about by giving contentment to the Irish people. If you push matters to this extremity, that you place the English nation in the situation of becoming the evictor from land in Ireland, you may depend upon it Home Rule will come in a way I do not wish to see it come; because the English people would find themselves in a situation with reference to Ireland of either having to surrender these vast advances or of taking a course with reference to the people, which I venture to say that public opinion would not support. According to the Bill, land being the first security, eviction must be the first remedy for non-payment; that must come before every other security. You have no right to come upon a surety until you have gone against the principal; and the principal is the land. If any default takes place the first duty is to proceed to eviction. If that fails it is a remarkable thing; it is worthy of observation that there are all sorts of provisions as to what you are going to do if you find the land will not sell. Look at Clauses 19 and 20 and see how the Government is going to manage and farm land itself. This provision is made because it is seen that it is likely to be needed. But the Government is not like an individual landowner who may have a farm here and there thrown on its hands. If the British Government has one farm it will have all that is represented by the £33,000,000. You have behind you what the Chief Secretary calls three impossibilities, securities which he considers protect the British Treasury with a triple wall of brass. It seems to me that the brass is rather in the assertion than in the securities. The hypothecation of local funds, in my opinion, is utterly worthless. Take the first of these three impossibilities. As to the cash guarantee from the Exchequer contributions, is it possible to maintain that while you give these contributions to England and Scotland without conditions, you can hypothecate them for the sake of a handful of tenants in Ireland? You can do nothing of the kind. As the hon. Member for Cork said, the proposal is monstrous and absurd; as it is not a general settlement, but deals only with one-fourth or one-fifth of the tenants, it is so utterly unjust and unjustifiable that it cannot be sustained for a moment. Then you have actually seized upon the county percentage of a quarter per cent. and impounded it as one of your guarantees. These rates ought to be devoted to the benefit of the whole community, and not to make a market for the land of certain landlords and a reduction of rent for certain tenants. I submit that that is a most improper hypothecation of the public funds. Those grants are in relief of the agricultural interest, and are really part of the resources out of which the rent ought to be earned. If that be so, what an idle thing it is to take away those resources and use them as a security for the payment of the rent. Your second resource is the grants for Local Government in Ireland. That amounts to a proposal to break up the whole social system of the counties in that country, and you employ those grants for the benefit of an inconsiderable fraction of the tenants of Ireland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer the other night said you did not talk of imposing obligations where the obligations were such as the people were delighted to take, and he added that the Scotch tenants would be delighted to get such terms. My right hon. Friend was not speaking of the Scotch tenants who got the boon, but of the people who did not get the boon, and had to bear the burden. Here you are hypothecating these funds which are provided for the benefit of people who get nothing under your Bill. That is the thing against which we protest. It is like drawing a bill in favour of one man, and putting on the back the name of another without his consent. You cannot enforce that security, and, therefore, it is perfectly illusory. It is exactly the same with your third security—an assessment to be imposed by the Grand Jury or the Lord Lieutenant. Who supposes that such an assessment can be imposed? I do not know whether I need mention the Tenants' Insurance Fund. It is proposed, as I understand the Bill, that if the land is held at 20 per cent. there is no margin for insurance; but when you hold the land below 20 per cent. there is. In fact, the more you pay, the less insurance, and the less you pay, the more insurance you have. I venture to say that is a correct representation of the Tenants' Insurance Fund, one of the many funds which are to protect the British taxpayer. Then you are to buy arrears, and you are to treat them as assets. These are the securities which my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham says protect the British taxpayer. These guarantees are a confiscation of the local assets of the country, and without the consent of the people they are to be applied for the benefit of a few individuals. To call them guarantees is a mere abuse of terms, for they never can be enforced. The Secretary for Ireland called them "three impossibilities," and so they are; but only because it is impossible they can ever be enforced. Take your securities into the City of London and see what you can get for them. Why did not my right hon. Friend make it one of his recommendations to the Government that the Consols should be struck out of the Bill? Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer go to the Bank of England, or to the houses of Rothschild or Baring, and find how much of the £33,000,000 they will give him on the security of the "three impossibilities." I think they will bow him very politely out of their parlours. Why not ask the landlords to take them? I should like to see the face of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson), or of the landlord's agent, the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), if they were asked to take the security without the Consols. You seek to make the Irish people guarantee the security against their will. They repudiate it, and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham supports them in that repudiation. You have no right to hypothecate their funds without their consent. They have a perfect right to say, "*Non hœc in fœdera veni.*" It is like asking a man to sign an accommodation bill and telling him he will never be called upon to pay. That is the real nature of the liabilities under this Bill. I have endeavoured to deal with the points upon which my right hon. Friend challenged me. He said, "Prove to me that there is risk to the English Exchequer under this Bill, and I admit I ought to oppose it." I maintain there is no one of those securities which ever can be realised that gives the smallest security in case of the repudiation or non-payment of these instalments to the British Treasury. It is hardly necessary, in the presence of enormous figures and transactions of this kind, to mention smaller matters. But there is one important thing in point of principle. As I understand, the costs of ascertaining the title and of the transfer will be paid by the British taxpayer directly. The established principle, as in the case of the Charity Commissioners, has always been that those costs should fall on the estate.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is so under the Bill.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Then I am wrong on that point. Perhaps I have spoken too long; but I have endeavoured to address myself directly to the question as to who is to be responsible, and where the liability is. I need hardly say I agree to what was said by my right hon. Friend about the folly of trying to settle the land question without the counsels of the Irish people and without the advice and goodwill of their Representatives. All Governments have been to blame in that. I have no faith in those schemes for the betterment of Ireland which come out of Downing Street, and which have no Irish advice except the advice of a few Dublin lawyers, who are not always very good advisers. In my opinion, there is no security in this Bill unless you secure the goodwill of the Irish people. I do not object, in all circumstances, to using British credit for the purposes of Ireland; but it must be used for men who are your friends, and not for men whom you treat as enemies. Is it not an astonishing thing that you who go about denouncing the leaders of the Irish people and the Irish people themselves as thieves and robbers, who have spent all your energy, and your money, and your time in endeavouring fix upon them the stigma of crime, who go to your constituents and say the Irish people have no regard for the Ten Commandments, should be going to lend those men £33,000,000 of English money? Either it is a most reckless and spendthrift proposal, or else these charges you have made are false charges, and you have made them knowing them to be false. It is perfectly impossible, and inconsistent with the language which nobody more persistently uses than the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that you should trust this sum of money to men whom you so describe. Here is a people to whom you cannot trust the ordinary rights of the Constitution, whom you are treating with coercion every day. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Mayo, if he was to dare to go to Mayo and recommend the tenants not to buy under this Bill, would not be sent to prison. People have been sent to prison for doing what is exactly the same thing. What I wish to point out is that the first condition of making this advance is that you should have confidence in the people to whom you are making it, instead of treating them in the hostile spirit in which you are now treating them. With reference to your Bill generally, I confess that when you have reduced Ireland to this elementary condition I do not see why the whole process should not begin again, and why these small tenancies should not coalesce like drops of quicksilver which you run upon a plate, and which join together into one mass; I see nothing in your Bill to prevent this land being sold, no limit to the number of people who may purchase. There is another consideration connected with this Bill to which I should like to allude, perhaps, most important of all. If you can perform this gigantic operation of advancing £30,000,000 to-day and £100,000,000 to-morrow with absolute safety and with no risk to anybody, why do you stop there? If it is true that there is no risk in a gigantic pledging of English credit, if it is only a nominal affair, are there no tenants in England, in Scotland, or in Wales who desire to have their rents reduced by 20 per cent.? Are there no landlords overwhelmed with mortgages in the rest of the United Kingdom who would like to have a few millions advanced by a hocus-pocus of this sort, with no risk of any kind? Is there no question of the housing of the working classes, no question of allotments and small holdings? Why should not all the industrial resources of the country be subsidised by untold millions, advanced by a little ingenious juggling, without anybody running any risk? Do you imagine that these are demands which will not necessarily arise out of a Bill of this description? In this country you can never take a step of this kind without its being followed by consequences. The English nation have an almost superstitious reverence for precedent, and you are making a gigantic precedent which you have no reason for confining to Ireland. If it is sound for Ireland, it is sound for every other part of the kingdom. I commend that consideration to the Conservative Members of this House, and to the constituencies of Conservative Members, and I think that they will do well to bear it in mind. I confess that nothing astonishes me more than that the ringleader of this sort of switchback finance should be the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is a very peculiar thing: we have a Chancellor of the Exchequer who is supposed to be a prudent financier. He made a speech here the other night, and in it there was no attempt to defend the security that is to protect the English taxpayer. In my opinion, this is a question which is only to be settled by the consent of the Irish people as evidenced by their Representatives. To your Bill and your proposals that consent is refused. It must be settled also by the consent of the English people. That consent you have no right to give. You have no mandate from this nation to spend its money in this manner, upon these securities, and for these purposes.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has borne testimony to that fact; he has said that, whether rightly or wrongly the electorate of England at the last Election demanded that this thing should not be done. I do not myself admire the argument of *tu quoque;* I will not quote the pledges that have been given; it will be for each Member of Parliament to justify to his own constituents the pledges which he has given upon this subject; but to us, at least, the course is clear. We, at least, in the name of that portion of the community whom we represent, and whom we believe now at least to be a majority of the United Kingdom—we, at least, upon the Second Reading of this Bill, refuse their consent and our consent to incurring these vast liabilities, which are secured by these delusive guarantees.

*(8.55.) MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): I listened with great interest to the exhaustive speech of the right hon. Gentleman who immediately preceded me, and I think we find in it an explicit statement of the real reasons which have operated upon his mind, and upon the minds of his Colleagues, in inducing them to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill. From first to last the right hon. Gentleman's speech was a frank appeal to the cupidity of the English taxpayer. The other speakers who preceded him have put forward other arguments, but they have not, I think, relied very much on their force, except in so far as they were likely to raise the fears of those on whom any contingent loss involved in the operations of this Bill must fall. The right hon. Gentleman has attacked and criticised some of the securities in this Bill; other securities he has attacked without criticism, merely assuring the House that they exist only upon paper. I think that the securities which the right hon. Gentleman has honoured with criticism are well worthy of the attention of the House. The right hon. Gentleman has criticised the security to be found in the holding, which it will be in the power of the Land Commission to seize and farm on its own account, declaring that we are advancing on four-fifths of its value of the holding. But we are really advancing four-fifths of the landlord's interest alone upon the security of the whole holding; and,

therefore, when the right hon. Gentleman condescends to criticism, he has found whatever success has attended his efforts merely in understating the security which is plainly to be read in the Bill. The other securities the right hon. Gentleman dismisses with a wave of his hand, declaring that they resemble the walls of sand built up by children on the seashore around a castle. But if the castle is to represent the money in the pocket of the taxpayer, I maintain that it has been constructed above high-water mark, for the British taxpayer, or the Government, acting in his interests, has only to refuse to give the annual contingent which we owe to Ireland in order to secure absolutely his own property from any risk. The right hon. Gentleman has endeavoured to add to the terrors of the taxpayer by denouncing State landlordism, as the right hon. Gentleman the leader of the Opposition denounced it in his speech. He has pointed out that that will necessitate eviction carried out immediately under the Imperial Government. But what was the remedy contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in introducing the similar provision contained in his Land Bill of 1870? On that occasion he asked the House what remedy there would be in the event of non-payment, and he declared that the Government had not only the remedy of eviction, but the power to attach the whole produce of the farm. Therefore, we find, at the very outset, that in the past other Governments, pursuing similar schemes of Land Purchase, have been willing to undertake the risks which we are willing to undertake; that they have thought themselves secured against these risks by only one out of the many remedies which we believe to be effectual now. The right hon. Gentleman has also attacked the Tenants' Insurance Fund. He has been led away by the seductive argument of the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Knox), who assured the House that since when 20 years' purchase was given there would be no tenants insurance—the security became less as the risk increased, and increased as the risk diminished. The hon. Member and the right hon. Gentleman seemed to hold that Irish land worth 20 years' purchase is a more risky investment than land which is only worth 12 years' purchase. It must be obvious that the very reverse is the case. If land is worth 20 years' purchase it is because the landlord has been able to collect his rents; and if it is worth only 12 years' purchase it is because the landlord has not been able to collect his rents, and has a poor chance of doing so in the future. The right hon. Gentleman further inveighed against the provision allowing the Land Commission to add two years' rent for arrears where they exist. In doing so, I think he laid himself open to the charge which he and others are so fond of bringing against us, of ignoring, in our attempts to legislate for Ireland, the real conditions of the problem. The Land Commissioners are only allowed, under this Bill, to fix the capital sum of the landlord's interest in the holding. If they are debarred altogether from adding anything to that sum, the result will be that on every estate in Ireland, where the Bill is most likely to effect some good, it will be absolutely inoperative. It is a common place that on the estates on which a deadlock has been brought about the difficulty is that the tenants have been persuaded not to pay the judicial rent in consequence of some quarrel with the landlord as to the reduction, which their advisers maintain ought to be given on the judicial rents. These quarrels have lasted for two, three, or four years. It is asserted, not by English politicians, but by the friends of the tenants, that the only solution of such a deadlock is to be found in purchase. If the Land Commission are precluded from dealing with arrears the deadlock will continue, against the advice of those who constitute themselves the friends of the tenants in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman appears to belong to a faithless generation, always asking for a sign. He seems to think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he has confidence in his securities, will be anxious to test them by going to the City of London, and endeavouring to raise money on them from the Rothschilds or Barings. I should have thought that if a man had full confidence in his securities he would not be tempted to test them. But if the right hon. Gentleman (Sir W. Harcourt) is so enamoured of this test, I would suggest that he should take the security he proposes to the same place and test it in the same manner. He has declared that there can be no security but "the goodwill of the people, who are to be your debtors." Let the right hon. Gentleman call on Messrs. Rothschild or Messrs. Baring with that security and see whether they will not bow him off their premises in precisely that polite manner which he himself indicated as the probable termination of their interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Then he asked the House why, if we could advance £33,000,000 without risk, we should stop there. The answer is that £33,000,000 represents the capital value of the securities mentioned in the Bill. When he asks, also, why some of this money is not apportioned to England and Scotland, he should remember the opinions expressed on land purchase by all sections of the House. During the debates of 1870, 1883, and 1884, a great distinction was always drawn between England and Ireland. In 1870 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, in order to draw this distinction, pointed out that in Ireland the tenant had not that sufficient security for his holding which he possesses in England. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to remedy that in part by purchase, and in part by other devices, and it is interesting to note that he, contemplating possible remedies, strongly condemned, at that time, anything in the nature of judicial rent, declaring that it would reduce the landlord into the mere receiver of a rent-charge. Yet, in 1881, the right hon. Gentleman adopted a measure which brought about, in an aggravated form, the very evil he foresaw so clearly in 1870. That measure may have been necessary to meet the growing evils of the pursuit of agriculture in Ireland. But if it was a necessity, it was followed by another necessity, namely, the dissolution of the infelicitous partnership into which it has forced the landlord and tenant in Ireland. After the speech to which we have just listened it may be necessary to remind the House how generally this view has been held and how forcibly it has been expressed by a Colleague of the late Prime Minister, and even by the present leader of the Irish Party. Speaking in 1884 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir G. Trevelyan) declared—

> "Now the Government believe, and earnestly believe, that the social and political state of Ireland and its agricultural condition are such that there never was a country in the world in which it was more important that many of those who till the land should own it.'"

Holding that view, the right hon. Gentleman proceeded to develop a plan for the lending of £20,000,000 by the State, safeguards being provided by a hypothecation of local rates in Ireland. That plan was the outcome of a suggestion made by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1883, and in connection with it the leader of the Irish Party declared himself so far in favour of peasant proprietorship as to lay down that it had succeeded with Ireland, and that if the House would remove existing difficulties—if, for one thing, they would advance all the money, a point, by the way, on which he is still at issue with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton—

> "The House would lay the foundation of the creation of a large class of occupying owners in Ireland, and thus be able to see an approach of a successful and honourable settlement of the great land question in Ireland."

Such glorious results the hon. Member for Cork anticipated from a very similar and analogous experiment advocated only seven years ago. I know perfectly well he now asserts that £30,000,000 is too small a sum, and will be so partial in its operation as to raise more discontent than it alleviates. But I find that in 1883 the hon. Member, speaking of £20,000,000, said to the House, "Surely the vastness of the operation should not be a deterrent." £20,000,000 he considered a vast sum in 1883, but in 1890 he considers a sum of £30,000,000 so insignificant, that, applied in this way, it will rather raise discontent than allay the irritation in Ireland. I know, too, he has somewhat discountenanced the present plan by the device of introducing an alternative. I will not discuss the alternative proposal of the hon. Member for Cork, but I must point out that it was not Land Purchase, and that in 1883 the hon. Member asked—

> "Had it or had it not been the policy of Governments in recent years to encourage peasant proprietorship in Ireland?"

That is the question I am tempted to ask right hon. Gentlemen who make such speeches as that to which the House has just listened. It almost seems as if the hon. Member for Cork and the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had faltered in their attacks upon this Bill, upon turning back and reading what they had in times past said upon the subject. A great deal is said as to the risk to the British taxpayer. But British credit has entered into every scheme of Land Purchase that has been suggested, and no scheme can be successful without it. It is British credit which gives the landlord that security which induces him to sell, and which enables the terms of purchase to be so fixed as to give the tenant an immediate reduction of rent, and thus induce him to buy. It is evident there are three parties to the transaction—the landlord, the tenant, and the British taxpayer. If you are going to attack the proposal of the Government, you ought, at least, to select one line of the three possible lines of attack. You may say that the landlord gets too much, and the tenant too little, or it may be said that the tenant gets too much, and the landlord too little. It may be said that they both get too much, and that an undue burden is put on the taxpayer. I submit it cannot be said that the landlord gets too little, and that the tenant gets too little, and that the taxpayer is unduly taxed in order to effect that result. And yet every one of these three arguments have been urged against the Bill. There has been no unanimity. The nearest approach to unanimity has been in selecting the argument that the tenant gets too little, and the landlord too much. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has declared that by making the Bill voluntary the Government will enable the landlord to get nearly the whole of the boon which they intend for the tenant, and the leader of the other wing of the Opposition has declared that the tenant will be asked to pay an exorbitant and exaggerated price. I take that to mean that, under the scheme of the Government, they assert that the landlord will get too much, and the tenant too little, but I contend that a fallacy underlies the whole of that portion of the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. It is not the end, aim, and object of our Bill to give to the tenant a reduction, and merely a reduction, upon the judicial rent. Our object is to enable the tenants of Ireland to buy the landlords' interest at whatever price they think it may be worth to them. The fact that they get a reduction is merely an accident due to the use of British credit, and a bait to induce them to perform this operation, which, we believe, will conduce to the welfare of the whole of Ireland, and, indeed, of England as well. It has been said that the landlord will be able to bring irresistible pressure to bear on the tenant. That is not only contrary to all the facts that we have noted, and noted with sorrow, in the recent history of Ireland, but it is also a travesty of the proposals contained in this Bill. The tenant is empowered to buy a definite commodity, namely, the landlord's interest for what he thinks it is worth to him. I think it will readily be admitted by everyone that the compulsion is far more likely to be used, if at all, by the tenant towards the landlord, than by the landlord towards the tenant. The hon. Member for West Mayo (Mr. Dillon), pointed out that under the Bill it was very probable that landlords would be anxious to part with their estates, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division also thought that in many cases the tenants would be able to bring undue pressure to bear upon their landlords. Even if the Bill does secure some benefit to the landlord I cannot see that any very damaging criticism can be founded on that fact. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley), speaking so recently as 1886, pointed out—

> "That the late Government to their great honour had passed an Act to prevent the landlords confiscating the property of their tenants. That was a noble exploit, but I do not think we shall be able to deal satisfactorily with Ireland until we have passed some legislation to prevent the tenants confiscating the property of their landlords."

If the Bill of the Government does in any way prevent the tenants confiscating the property of their landlords we, upon this side of the House, shall not look upon it as a blemish. We believe that the Bill very fairly holds the balance between the three parties who are concerned in any measure of this kind, and perhaps on that very account has been criticised from three opposite points of view. The hon. Member for Cork has actually adopted each of the three lines of attack I have indicated, although they are diametrically opposed to each other. He has told the landlords they will get less money than at present; he has told the tenants they will be compelled to give exaggerated and exorbitant prices for their holdings, and he has told the taxpayers of England that since the Bill will leave three-fourths of the tenants and nine-tenths of the landlords untouched, it will perpetuate and render absolutely certain additional agitation for the extension of its scope, in order, I suppose, that the landlords may enjoy a smaller income, and that the tenants may pay a larger price for their interest than is worth to them. These arguments against the provisions of the Bill are mutually destructive, but another class of arguments springs from objections to the Bill based on the time and circumstances of its introduction. It is said that the Government are precluded from using British credit in support of any scheme of Land Purchase, because in 1886 the country definitely declared against such use; and, in the second place, it is said that such a measure as this ought not to be passed in opposition to the views of the Representatives from Ireland. Now with regard to the first point, it is to be noticed that the risk to the British taxpayer has been reduced in this Bill almost to a vanishing point. The risk under the present Bill is very different to the risk under the Bill of 1886. Under the scheme of 1886 Ireland was granted Home Rule, but was to pay an Imperial contribution to England besides the instalments accruing in consequence of our buying out the landlords. Both those imposts were objected to at the time. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian introduced his measure of Home Rule, and stated that the contribution which he proposed to exact from Ireland, was to be 1-15th, there were loud cries of 1-20th. Certainly hon. Members below the Gangway opposite argued in that sense. Again, I do not think anyone can deny that Members on that side felt seriously alarmed when the right hon. Gentleman proposed to impose compulsory purchase at 20 years upon Irish estates. In 1886, accordingly, the danger of repudiation was aggravated by the fact that Ireland had to pay an Imperial contribution which she considered too high, and instalments for land purchase which she considered too high, and which now everyone in this House would consider too high. Now, I maintain that the risk involved in that scheme was simply enormous, and the risk to the taxpayer now involved is reduced to nothing at all. We are told that we cannot disregard this opposition even though we do not believe these proposals entail risk to our pockets, that there is a moral obligation not to disregard this opposition, because we ought to listen to the voice of Ireland, as expressed through her Representatives. Very well; but which voice are we to listen to, for her voice as now expressed is entirely different to the voice of seven years ago? Then the voice of Ireland loudly demanded Land Purchase by State assistance. Are we to attach more value to the voice now? When a bias in favour of Home Rule makes it ring with an uncertain sound? In saying this, I do not in the least bring forward a charge of insincerity against hon. Members below the Gangway, or say that they are necessarily betraying the interests of their constituents. If they believe that they are likely to be shortly in a position to pass better laws for Ireland they would be fools if they did not oppose the Bill. But we who believe that that is a remote contingency, almost outside the range of practical politics, would stand convicted of ten-fold folly if we preferred the voice in which hon. Members from Ireland speak now to the voice in which they spoke in 1883. The leaders of the Opposition have declared that the political risk is ten times the economical risk. The hon. Member for Mayo has uttered an impressive warning, which will be noted throughout the country, that it may be the duty of Members below the Gangway to preach repudiation to the Irish tenant. If that is the case the argument based upon the opposition of the Irish Members loses a great deal of its importance and its weight. The Government will derive absolute advantage from dealing directly with the

Irish tenants, who, in the past, have honestly discharged similar obligations. If repudiation is a political and not an economical risk, it follows that the risk would be increased if the Government were to deal with political or local bodies, who would be the very instruments for carrying into effect the prophecy of the hon. Gentleman. Dealing, as we do, directly with the Irish tenant we are not afraid of repudiation. For confirmation of this view I would appeal to the words of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian who, when he produced a similar scheme in 1870, said he believed that the Irish tenant would appreciate the sacredness of the obligations he was contracting, and discharge them. I know that the views of the leader of the Opposition in 1870 will not carry much weight with hon. Members below the Gangway, because he then held different ideas upon the proper Government of the Empire. I would, therefore, appeal for the last time to the voice of Ireland as expressed by the leader of Gentlemen below the Gangway, who said, in 1883, that it was extremely unlikely that if the tenants were asked to pay a reduced rent-charge, any agitation or any political party would be able to do what they failed to do from 1878 to 1883—namely, to prevent them from paying the annual charge necessary to keep a roof over their heads. The tender regard, the fear for the British taxpayer, has underlain every argument put before the House. But, as the hon. Member for Cork said on the same occasion, "You should not exaggerate difficulties or raise up phantoms on this question." That is the appeal of Her Majesty's Government now. In the belief that these fears are but shadowy phantoms, I shall vote with the greatest confidence for the Second Reading of this Bill.

*(9.40.) MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.): I am sorry that the hon. Member who, like myself, is a politician without a past, should have thought fit to encumber his able argument with undue references to speeches made by politicians less fortunately situated. If there is one subject which more than another fails to excite any interest in my breast it is the attempt to prove or disprove accusations of inconsistency. In truth, if hon. Members on either side had nothing to cover themselves with but their consistency, they would be, to say the least of it, insufficiently clad. I am not one of those who feel that under no circumstances should the British Exchequer incur a risk to make some reparation to an unfortunate country to which so much injustice has been done in the past. But when I consider this measure, the persons by whom it is presented, and its chance of acceptance by the people to whom it is offered, I feel that it is not one which secures the British taxpayer, and, further, that it holds out very little prospect of doing good in Ireland. It is a device of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down to set one argument against another and say that they cannot both be true. That is not a fair way of dealing with arguments, because if one argument is true it may be sufficient to show that this is a bad Bill. Besides which, having regard to what sort of a Bill it is, under different circumstances and in different parts of the country, both arguments may be true. Now, with regard to the argument which has been used, as to the ill effect the Bill will produce in those cases where landlords may refuse to sell, I cannot do better than take the point as it is put in the *Economist*, a paper opposed to Home Rule, which is to the effect that if there are two adjoining estates, on one of which the tenants pay the old rents, on the other the tenants pay reduced rents, ultimately to become owners of their holdings, the former will come to their landlord and say that if you will not accept similar terms we will simply pay you no rent at all. How do you like the sound of this language, which is not the language of an Irish agitator but of the sober *Economist*? The argument is founded on human nature. Hon. Members refer to an argument of this kind with a sort of holy horror, they shrug their shoulders and say it is wicked, but in dealing with mankind we must not forget the fact of the Fall. So far as I have any right to import my personal experience into a matter of this kind my own experience teaches me that if we give a debtor a plausible reason for not paying his legal debts, in

nine cases out of ten he will not pay them. In my judgment the tenants in question would have got a plausible reason for refusing to pay. I do not think it is sufficiently realised what an unreasonable position it is that this enormous advantage to the tenant, this buying out of the landlord should depend not on the justice of the case, but simply and solely upon the whim of the landlsrd. I am certain you will find that tenants will refuse to continue to pay rents if they are not allowed to participate in the benefit of what ought to be a common boon. If such a repudiation takes place, the Government will be obliged to come to Parliament for an enormous advance of money to enable them to complete the settlement of this land question. But what, then, becomes of your nicely-calculated security, which is just enough for £33,000,000, and no more? Another objection is this. The Bill puts a limit on the amount of money to be advanced to one tenant, and it also limits the amount to be advanced for the purchase of land to 20 years' purchase, but it does not prescribe the terms of the contract. Consequently, where a tenant is anxious to buy, there is nothing to prevent him paying 25 years' purchase provided he pays the balance of five years out of his own resources. That is bad economics. Any money the tenant has, ought to go in reduction of the fair price, not in increasing it. Now, the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes one of these arguments from the right hon. Gentleman the Member fo Mid Lothian, and the other from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, and says I will leave these to fight it out, and then, under cover of the applause such remarks never fail to draw, he drops the subject and reappears in another place. But I say either argument is fatal, and both arguments may apply. An argument which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian used with great force and emphasis has not been replied to—the argument that you dare not hypothecate the rates of Scotland against the wishes of five-sixths of her Representatives. It was a fair challenge he made, but the only reply the Chancellor of the Exchequer made to it was the very trite observation, Scotland is not Ireland. No, it is not, but it is part of the United Kingdom under the same representative system and Constitution, and therein lies the whole application of the argument, that you are applying to one part of the kingdom treatment which you dare not apply to another part. The Government practically admit the force of the argument. If the Government have any doubt as to whether the Irish Members are the duly authorised agents of the Irish people to speak their wishes on this question, they should ask the Irish people in a Constitutional way whether or not they confirm that agency. You have no right to rely simply and solely on your own judgment or belief. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham put the whole thing upon credit, and said he was not disposed to lend a farthing of British money unless perfectly satisfied that the securities are good. Now, when one comes to deal with these I am almost ashamed to say anything more about them, they have been so cannonaded and riddled by argument. All the Government can say in reply is that the cannonading is not all directed to one point—that the objections are not unanimous. Well, it is true we do not all say the same thing, but is it no objection to a Bill that every speaker finds something new to say against it? With regard to the contingent credits, it was significant that the Chancellor of the Exchequer passed them by in silence. They are securities which humanity would never allow the Government to enforce, and upon which nobody would lend 6d. In order to punish Home Rule farmers who will not repay the money which the Government has been foolish enough to lend them the Government propose to tax the poor labourer by depriving him of medical assistance. The other security is the hypothecation of funds, which, in the opinion of almost the whole of Ireland, already belong in equity to the Irish people. Believing, as I do, that the day is not far distant when the Irish people will secure the blessings of self-government, I feel that the securities offered by this Bill are unsafe. What right have hon. Members opposite, when their majority is trembling in the balance, to back their opinion against that of their opponents with £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 of public money? I do not believe that the Irish people, in exchange for a cheque of £33,000,000, will erase from the tablets of their memories the names of their chosen leaders and substitute for them the name of the man who seldom speaks without insulting those leaders. We are asked to lend £33,000,000 by a Government who mean to deny the right of self-government to the Irish people, and we are asked to do this at a moment when the Government are almost at war with these people. I decline altogether to lend, *pendente lite*, such a vast sum of money as that. Satisfied as I am also that that sum must be increased, possibly to £150,000,000, I decline to be a party to this Bill.

(10.0.) Mr. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): This Bill has been described as complicated, but I am afraid it would be still more complicated if the Government were to attempt to embody all the suggestions which have been made by the hon. Member for Cork and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. The Bill has many other advantages over previous schemes of Land Purchase, by the consideration of which, no doubt, the Chief Secretary has profited. For myself, I am against the purchase of land in Ireland if there is any risk to the British Exchequer, and the question in this case is whether any such risk is incurred or not. As to the value of the guarantees, hon. Members have been too presumptuous in assuming that every shot they have fired has penetrated the armour of the Government. I am inclined to think that the guarantees are sufficient. It is a great advantage that this scheme is to be administered by this Parliament, and not by a Parliament to be created and to sit in Dublin. Whilst I admire the Bill I admit that it has defects, which may, however, very well be amended in Committee. In the first place, I think there ought to be stronger provisions against sub-letting and sub-division, or else Parliament will have to do all its work over again. Then I should be glad to see adopted the suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork and the application of the Bill limited to tenants under £50 or £70 valuation. If it were so limited, then a much less sum would be required. Under the Ashbourne Act the sums that have been paid to individuals have been far too large. When the extension of the Act was passed it was certainly never contemplated that any single individual should receive so large a sum as a quarter of a million. That quarter of a million ought to have been more evenly distributed in different parts of Ireland. In many cases the period of 49 years will be too long. There are many tenants who would be in a position to repay the advances in a less time. The number of payments might be reduced and the annual instalment increased. The period of 49 years is practically two generations, and if a purchase were effected by a man at the age of 21 he would be 71 before he came into the freehold of his holding. I have no great faith in Land Purchase, but I find every Party in the House more or less pledged to it, and as this scheme appears to be on the whole fair and workable, I feel bound to support it. It has been asked what would Scotch Members say if such a scheme were proposed for Scotland, and it is suggested that they would be up in arms against such a proposal. But the hon. Member for East Aberdeen last Session asked a suggestive question in the House; it was whether the Government had not received several communications and Memorials from Aberdeenshire and elsewhere, asking that the Ashbourne Act might be extended to Scotland, and whether the Government were disposed to consider the request favourably before the next meeting of Parliament. That question, at all events, shows that some people in Scotland are willing to have the advantages of the Ashbourne Act extended to them. Nevertheless, looking at the Divisions on the Ashbourne Act when it was before the House, I find that it was opposed by the hon. Member who put the question. The purchase scheme, however, is only part of the programme of the present Government. I should like to see the extension of Local Government to Ireland carried as early as possible—say next Session. I am, and many Members on this side are, in favour of the abolition of the Viceroyalty and of the system of government known as Dublin Castle rule. If Local Government is extended to Ireland upon the lines upon which it has been passed for England and Scotland, and if the Viceroyalty is abolished—though I should like to see a Royal Prince residing in Ireland for a part of the year—the Unionist Party may safely say they have carried the programme for the support of which they were returned to this House. It is in the expectation that these reforms will be carried out that I support the Second Reading of the Bill.

(10.10.) DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): The last speaker said that he was desirous for the prosperity of Ireland, and the question which, therefore, presents itself to this House and to the country is whether that object is to be attained by the methods which are recommended by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, or by those methods which are recommended by the Representatives of the Irish people in this House. This brings to our minds on this side of the House the manner in which our country has been treated by hon. Members opposite, and by those who support the Government. The Attorney General for Ireland said that this was a theoretical Land Purchase Bill. I am not quite sure whether the learned Attorney General was correct in so describing this measure, because, after all, when we come to consider it, I think that, should it unfortunately ever become law, it will be discovered to be a practical scheme for the bribery of a certain section of the landlord class in Ireland, and I am strongly of opinion that it will give rise to a state of chaos and disorder which will produce a land war such as there has never been before. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Birmingham, whom we were glad to hear speak for the first time in this House the other night, supported this measure on the strength of something which he had heard from a man on the banks of a river in Ireland. If this man had been an Irishman—and I very much doubt that, because if there is one thing in the world of which a true Irishman is proud, it is his grammar—or rather your grammar—I think it would turn out that he knew little more about the subject than you do yourselves. But even if he were an Irishman, is it not preposterous nonsense for the hon. Member for Central Birmingham to come down here and support a measure dealing with £40,000,000 of the taxpayers' money, simply on the strength of a statement by such a man. Would it not have been far more sensible for the hon. Member to take the advice of such men as the hon. Members for Cork and East Mayo, who may be presumed to understand what really their countrymen require. Again, the hon. Member for Central Birmingham told us that the prosperity of the tenant farmers of Ulster was due to their superior intelligence. But, Sir, as a Southerner, I repudiate the assertion with indignation. If the hon. Member had read the speeches of his distinguished father in the year 1866, he would have learned that the prosperity of the tenant farmers of Ulster was due to the Ulster custom—that it was due to a combination among the Ulster tenants, which the Orange landlords, with all their adoration of King William, and with all their hatred of the Pope, never dared to assail. The hon. Member, however, said one thing as to which I am in entire agreement with him. He said that the Irish tenant was the honestest man in the world, and that he would be likely to pay any instalment which would become due from him under the provisions of this Bill. I agree with the hon. Member as to the honesty of my fellow countrymen; but I should like to know what the hon. Member for North Armagh has to say about that, for that hon. and gallant Gentleman, who is now at home picking up the ammunition which he will fire off in this House in a day or two, only three weeks since declared in this House that he never saw an Irishman who would pay anything so long as he could find anybody else to pay it for him. I disagree entirely with the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh. I think he must have been dreaming about the landlords of Ireland, because I never saw an Irish landlord who thought of paying anything so long as he could get the Government, or the Board of Works, or the taxpayers to pay it for him. He would not even pay his tailor's bill if he could put it on the shoulders of other people. The hon. Member for Central Birmingham also said that the tenants of Ireland would meet the demands made upon them under this Bill, because those demands would be the result of a free and open bargain. But I venture to assert that the scheme of purchase as between the landlord and the tenant does not represent a free bargain. It is a bargain made by a man with a pistol at his head—a double-barrelled pistol, one barrel of which is charged with two years arrears, and the other of which is charged with notices of eviction-made-easy. In my opinion no duty rests upon a man to discharge a debt so contracted, and I believe that, under such circumstances, a man is not likely to discharge a debt thus forced upon him. I am also inclined to think that a few years hence, should this Bill pass, the tenants who have purchased under it will come to the conclusion that they have paid a great deal more than they ought to have done. It should be remembered that in Ireland the rents are about 30 per cent. higher than those prevailing in England, and that, in the long run, they must sink to an equal level. I should like any hon. Gentleman opposite to tell me to what extent Free Trade in cattle in this country will be carried, and where it is likely to stop. Agriculturists in Ireland at this moment can produce nothing which would pay the cost of production. Last year there were imported into Scotland from Canada five-year old bullocks at the ridiculously low price of £13, a price for which the Irish farmer could not produce an animal of even only one-and-a-half years old. Again, recently there have been imported into Liverpool, thousands of sheep, coming from a country where they are only valued for their wool, and they have been actually imported at a loss of 10 per cent. Therefore, I want to know to what extent Free Trade can go, and when I am informed on that point I shall be happy to tell the hon. Member giving me the information, what is likely to be the value of land in Ireland 10 years hence. There is one provision in the Bill which, in my opinion, is alone sufficient to condemn it, and that is the provision by which it is sought to levy a tax through the agency of the Lord Lieutenant and the Grand Jury upon the industrious people of the community, in order to make up any deficiency in the repayment of the principal and interest. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, in proposing this, certainly shows that he is not a modern statesman. He attempted to govern Ireland by means of a Coercion Bill, and, failing success with that measure, he introduced into his system the ancient Act of Edward III. There, again, he failed in the objects which he sought to attain; and now he proposes to introduce into this Bill the ancient and antiquated provisions which cost Charles I. his head, and which, if the Bill is carried, will probably, two or three years hence, cost the right hon. Gentleman his political head. I venture to think that no Government will be able to enforce a tax such as that which is proposed. It would be a tax on the industrious for the benefit of the poor, the knave, and the drone. It will enable one man to put his head over the fence of another man's field and stop him in his operations. It will enable a man to say to the industrious tenant, "You have got up in the early morning, you have ploughed and sown; I have been a drone; I have gone into the public house to drink, but I am a wise man and you are a fool. You have sown, but I shall reap. You will have to pay the deficit which I have created." If the Government attempted to enforce such a tax as that, I venture to say we should be able to raise such an agitation, and create such a storm of indignation, that even the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh would not be able to withstand it, and it would take all the troops you could possibly put into the field in the case of an European war to enable you to enforce the impost. Sir, we have been accused of fighting against a measure which is to make the peasantry of Ireland the owners of the soil of Ireland. No such thing. We vote against this measure because the tenantry of Ireland will not be able to take advantage of it. We vote against it because it is a premium upon robbery, a tax upon industry, and a bribe given to a certain section of a certain class who have already reaped so much, through the agency of their rack rents, that they deserve no consideration at the hands of the British or Irish taxpayer. But, above all and before all, we vote against the Bill because, not being compulsory, it will be inoperative and inert. It will not touch the more infamous of your associates, such as the Marquess of Clanricarde; it will enable him still to carry on his war of extermination. In a word, we vote against it because it will create in Ireland a perpetual war, and because we desire to live in peace, in order that every section of our country, regardless of class or creed, may have an opportunity of combining to make Ireland what we intend to make her, a prosperous and free nation.

(10.2.) MR. HANBURY (Preston): Sir, I am free to confess that, unlike the great majority of Members who sit on this side of the House, in many cases of eviction during the last two or three years it seemed to me that though the tenant was legally wrong, he was morally right, and though the landlord was legally right, he was morally wrong. That opinion is not weakened but strengthened, confirmed, and ratified by the introduction of this Bill, and endeavouring, as I have done, to look at this Bill with the utmost fairness, and without any Party bias, I confess I am utterly unable to form the estimate of it which has been stated by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, that this Bill can be called in any sense a landlords' Bill. Unfortunately that is a charge which can be brought against some Bills. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Trevelyan) was essentially a landlords' Bill. It was brought in when rents were a great deal higher and the scale of compensation was higher than that which is introduced into this Bill. The power of compulsion is put into the hands of the tenants in this Bill, in that it was put into the hands of the landlords. And the main reason for introducing that Bill for the benefit of the landlord was, I think, an insult to the Irish people—it was that they could not be trusted to deal honourably with their landlords if they got possession of their country. The position with regard to this Bill is the very reverse of all that; the rents are lower than they were at that time, the scale of compensation is lower, and compulsion is in the hands of the tenants, and not in the hands of the landlords. The principal argument against the Bill is that sufficient security is not taken for the money advanced, and that we are placing too great reliance on the honesty of the Irish people. How anybody can consider this a landlords' Bill, I fail to see. Take the case of a man paying £100 a year rent. What happens? The tenant buys at 20 years' purchase, and the landlord gets £55 a year, where he was getting £100. There is one tendency, as far as I can see, on the side of the landlord. By the Insurance Fund I find that a great inducement is offered to the tenant to buy at 20 years' purchase on account of the very small sum he contributes towards the Insurance Fund. A much heavier sum is paid in the case of purchase at 13 or 14 years. There is one other provision which, apparently, tells in favour of the landlord, and that is adding two years' arrears to the possible price. That, after all, is utterly a delusion. The tenant, after all, is not such a fool, if he had to pay two years for arrears, as not to take them off the number of years' purchase paid to the landlord. Another objection to this Bill, *primá facie*, seems to me a very fair one. It is said:—"It is all very well to say that the price which the tenant will pay in future will be less than he is paying at the present moment, but he will not be a free agent, because he will be acting under coercion." The hon. Member opposite said a double-barrelled pistol would be presented at his head; what is the charge in each of those barrels? One is the compulsion that will be brought to bear on the landlord. I have already said the compulsion is exactly the other way. An hon. Member opposite quoted an instance which exactly proves my case. Take the case of a tenant whose landlord is perfectly willing to sell to him. The result is that he gets his land at about 30 per cent. less than he had it at before. Or take the case of a tenant whose landlord does not wish to sell. The tenant can compel him to sell. Because this Bill is an admission by the Government that the owners of land in Ireland are entitled to hold that land at a price which is something like 30 per cent. less than the price at which they at present hold it. It is all very well to say that only £30,000,000 is involved, but as that sum is repaid it will be continuously used in the same direction. Therefore, the Bill will have universal application, and will be compulsory. If the present price is a fair one, then the tenant ought to be forced to pay it. But if it is not a fair price, and we do an act of benevolence, then we ought to do it, not at the cost of the landlord, but at the cost of the national purse. If this reduction is made for the public convenience, and to save trouble in Ireland, then it is a very dangerous course to pursue, for a bribe now will be the source of endless trouble. But the Government would never have taken this course had they not made up their minds that this 30 per cent. was fair, and ought to be carried out universally. As to the argument of coercion, if a tenant will neither purchase nor pay the present price, then it would be perfectly right to apply coercion to him. Or if the landlord should prove stubborn, and refuse to come to terms, then the nation would never tolerate that the tenant should not have the benefit of the Act. The double-barrelled weapon which the hon. Member has mentioned, therefore, tells against his own position. No doubt there is a great number of landlords in Ireland who have faithfully tried to do their duty, and I think that, in some respects, these men are treated harshly by the Bill. Many of them are struggling on honourably, in spite of the difficulties with which they have to contend, and I, for one, will support any Amendment in Committee which will enable these landlords to be dealt with more justly than they are. But, at present, it is useless to ignore the fact that we have to legislate for the general body, and not for the few. We cannot legislate for white blackbirds only, and I am sorry to say that the great majority of the class are black. I own it would be thoroughly unjust, even against the worst landlords, to rake up a history which shows that they have been always loyal themselves, but often have been the cause of disloyalty in others. And that history is by no means ancient history, and the traditions of their acts must linger long among the peasantry. There is no need to point to the past. I will refer only to the present, and I say boldly that a man like Lord Clanricarde, with his planter-like insolence, has sown more seed of disloyalty than any one else in Ireland. The difficulty is, that while you have punished the tenants you have encouraged and made yourselves accomplices of the landlords. In the interests of the Union this Bill will do a vast amount of good, if it will only get rid of such landlords as I have described.

Mr. DILLON : But it will not get rid of them.

Mr. HANBURY : I hope that such Amendments may be introduced into the Bill in Committee as will make that consummation possible, and I must add that if we do not deal in such a manner with such men this Bill will be absolutely useless. We frequently hear of landlords who spend a vast sum of money on their estates, who have se an admirable example to other landlords, and who give almost everything to their tenants except what the tenants most want, namely, their personal guidance and sympathy ; but, after all, I ask what is the use of a garrison whose best men are never at their post ? What confidence can we, as Unionists, have in a garrison, the best, and strongest, and the richest of whom, those least exposed to danger—I allude to the landlords of Ulster—whom we find deserting their posts at the very first opportunity, and leaving their weaker brethren, for whom the boon of the Ashbourne Act was primarily intended, in the lurch ? Looking at all these facts, I hope that throughout the length and breadth of Ireland this Bill will remove the obstacles to kindly feeling towards this country. Even in Ulster, if we are to have a garrison at all, I confess I should look more to those energetic manufacturers in that province who have no bad history in the past, and whose associations are with the old and destroyed industries of Ireland, their own factories being the remnant of the day when Ireland did not depend on agriculture alone—men who, even at the present day, supply what is the greatest want of Ireland, manufacturing industry, and whose interests do not in any way clash with those who are dependent upon them. We have already had some very remarkable admissions from the Government, but we have also had a remarkable admission from an individual who is almost a higher authority than the Government itself. We have had a proposition from the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), which, for my part, I consider to be most useful, when he suggested that this Bill should not apply to tenants paying more than £50 rental. I have one or two observations to make with regard to that suggestion. In the first place, I think the security for the repayment of the money advanced would be vastly increased by its adoption; and, in the second place, I think it meets the solitary objection which I entertained to this Bill. I have always thought, and have never seen any reason to alter my opinion, that the Irish tenant has no right to different treatment on the part of this House to that which is given to the English tenant, unless his condition and circumstances are shown to be totally different from those of the English tenant. I confess I do not see how the condition of the richer farmers of Ireland can be said to be at all different from that of the richer tenants in England; and I will go further, and add, that I do not see how the position of a good many of the smaller tenants in the manufacturing districts is different from that of the smaller tenants here. What has always struck me as the one reason for making an exception in favour of the Irish tenant is, where he has not sufficient capital to embark in other industries, where those industries are close at hand, the land affording him his sole occupation. No doubt this circumstance has weighed heavily with the condition of the great bulk of the Irish tenants, especially when we consider the enormous proportion of those who pay less than £20 a year rental. In point of fact, more than one-half of them pay an average of only £6 a year, and in those cases I think we are justified in turning the tenants into owners, because their case is totally different from anything to be met with in this country. What is their position? In the first place, as I have said, cultivation of the land is the only possible occupation for them. If they cannot get land they have no other means of living, and that is a very remarkable position. Again, there is a tremendous amount of competition among those tenants for the land they occupy. How is this competition fixed? It is mainly fixed on the standard derived from the cultivation of the potato—a standard smaller than that of any other agricultural community in the world. Upon that standard, coupled with the fact that the tenants are able to get their rent either by coming and working at harvest time in England, or from their relatives in America, everything is fixed, while all above that goes into the pockets of the landlords. We never had so low a standard in England. When we are told we are transgressing the laws of political economy in the proposal to purchase the land for these smaller Irish tenants, I say it is because competition and other results inimical to the tenant are found in Ireland as they have never been known in England. In this country the landlord recognises the fact that duties attach to property as well as landlord rights. If ever we come to such a state of things in England as we find existing in regard to the smaller tenants in Ireland we shall be justified in passing for England a Bill like this, but at present no such case exists. Therefore, I say we are not breaking the laws of political economy by purchasing the land for the small tenants. Indeed, the ordinary laws of political economy were never intended to apply to such a state of circumstances. In such a case but one result follows, and it is because of that that we are bound to give the Irish tenants a position in the future which will prevent the possibility of the recurrence of such a state of things. It is because of the competition and the raising of his rent that the Irish tenant does not get the full reward of his labour. It is said that the Irishman is lazy by nature, but I ask is the Irishman lazy here? I have employed several of them, and I always found them to work just as well as English labourers. We know that all the great works all over the world have, to a great extent, been built by means of Irish labour. We know what he is as a soldier, and we appreciate him as an Irish constable, and I say he is quite as good as an Englishman or a Scotchman when he meets with his proper reward. It is because I hope that this Bill will tend to remove some of the difficulties he labours under that I want to see it applied to the small tenant. It is said that, to a great extent, he has security for his holding already. I do not know how far that may be the case in Ulster, where dual ownership has, from time immemorial, been the custom, but in the rest of Ireland the Government admit the dual ownership to be an unworkable system. Wherever we have tinkered at this subject we have only made matters worse. We made it far worse for the tenants when we introduced the Bill for the sale of encumbered estates. The same thing happened when we went further and gave the tenant the benefit of his own improvements, because the Law Courts over-ruled us, and the tenant did not get the full benefit intended, while under the system of judicial rents the tenant feels that there is great uncertainty—at any rate not the certainty he has a right to expect, in looking for a reward for his labour. Therefore, the Government have, at last, decided to come between the tenant and the landlord, and remove the difficulty by making the tenant his own landlord in future. We are told that we are only getting rid of the difficulty for the present, and will create a new and, perhaps, a worse set of landlords for the future; but when the tenant is certain of a reward for his labour, and there is no power tending directly, or indirectly, to the raising of his rent, I am convinced he will be found working as well and as hard upon his farm in Ireland as he works elsewhere. In that case I am sure he will not be anxious to sub-divide his farm. After all, how has sub-division been brought about? It has been brought about by the action of the landlords in the past, which has practically forced them into sub-division. What has been the history of this question? There are no less than six causes which have brought about the sub-division of land in Ireland. In the first place, up to 1839 there was no Poor Law in Ireland, and there was nothing to induce a landlord to prevent any needy man from settling upon his land. Then the law of tithes, only remedied 40 or 50 years ago, by which tithes were not leviable upon grazing ground, made it to the benefit of the landlord to have these small holdings. The tenants of the small holdings were able to live on potatoes, and, therefore, they were able to pay a higher rent than the holders of richer farms. That, again, was a great inducement to the landlords to have these small holdings. But the greatest inducement for a landlord to increase the number of tenants on his estate is that he increases his political influence. With regard to the question of security, looking to the immense advantage which a Bill of this sort will give to Ireland, I am perfectly willing to run some risk. If it is successful, even from a monetary point of view, the gain will be enormous to this country. With the exception of agrarian crime, Ireland is singularly free from criminal offences, and if, by doing away with agrarian crime, we can diminish the necessity for a force of 30,000 military and 12,000 constabulary in Ireland, the gain, from a mere monetary point of view, will be very considerable indeed. If, however, the security is considered insufficient, I think there are directions in which it can be increased. At the present moment the landlord's security is the security of the land, and I cannot conceive why the landlord should have more security for the payment of his interest in the future than he has had for the payment of his rent in the past, and, on the other hand, in the case of a general refusal to pay we might increase the Customs dues upon articles imported into Ireland, as suggested by Mr. Arnold Foster. I am unwilling, however, to believe that the Irish tenants are knaves or the English people fools. To suppose Irish tenants will repudiate these payments is a libel on their honesty and an insult to common sense. The Irish tenants have loyally paid their instalments under the Ashbourne Acts, under Acts which, by the way, do not afford the security which is afforded by this Bill, and, therefore, to assume that in future they will be dishonest seems to me a libel upon the whole tenantry of Ireland. With regard to the English people, though in the past a good many of them have looked with strong misgivings upon the evictions that have taken place. in the future there will be nothing of that kind. Where the Irish tenant has voluntarily entered into an engagement of this kind, and where the whole gain is on his side, English people will feel that right is on their side, and will in the last resort use every legitimate means to recover that money which is fairly their own. The Bill is a fair attempt to deal, not with the political grievances, but with the material grievances of the Irish tenant, and we on this side of the House think that, by removing the material grievance, we shall go a long way towards removing the political grievance. In addition to that, I look upon the Bill as not only lowering the tenant's rent to a very considerable extent, but also as one which for the first time entirely and thoroughly gives to the tenant that which he has never had before, namely, the certainty that if he is an honest man and works laboriously and industriously on his farm, he will secure the advantage of his labour. It also confers a great boon upon Ireland itself at large, because from that country, which has been singularly free from ordinary crime, we shall, by this Bill, if it is successful, remove that which has been constantly the one dark blot upon its history, the ever-recurring curse of agrarian crime.

(11.10.) Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland Division): Although I cannot agree with everything that has been said by the hon. Gentleman, it is only fair to say that we, on these benches, recognise the extremely kind way in which he has spoken. If we had many speeches

of the same nature, and if the acts of the Government in Ireland were inspired by the same spirit as ran through the hon. Gentleman's speech, we would approach the consideration of this Bill, and of other Acts of the present Administration, in a very different temper than we do at present. But I do not think the hon. Gentleman was altogether correct in his appreciation of the results of this measure. We thank him for the very candid and manly confession that whereas a number of landlords in Ireland may have been legally right they were morally wrong in their recent proceedings against their tenants. The hon. Gentleman mentioned the Marquess of Clanricarde, and said that this Bill will enable us to get rid of landlords of the type of the Marquess of Clanricarde. He said, further, that the proceedings of men like the Marquess of Clanricarde are the greatest peril to the cause of the Union of which he is an advocate. With regard to his statement as to the Marquess of Clanricarde, I would remind him that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has sent to gaol at least 130 persons for refusing to submit to Lord Clanricarde's exaction of legal rights but moral wrongs. The hon. Gentleman is wrong when he says this Bill will enable us to get rid of men like the Marquess of Clanricarde. There is no compulsion in the Bill by which such landlords can be got rid of. It will probably not be the Marquess of Clanricarde and such landlords who will be got rid of, but fairly reasonable absentees with comfortable tenants. Now, I am surprised that no one has risen from the Treasury Bench to answer the speech of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. Whether the right hon. Gentleman is the patron or the tool of the Government, he has in his speech this evening made the most damaging criticism that has yet been heard against the Bill.

The right hon. Gentleman said very properly that it is proposed to pledge the securities of localities in Ireland without constituting a Local Authority or having any consultation with the locality. And he added rightly that such a thing would not be thought of in the case of any English city; and he indicated that if such preposterous and inequitable proceedings were tried in Birmingham, for instance, there would be a pretty kettle of fish. I can promise the right hon. Gentleman that if the Government pledge the rates and securities of localities in Ireland without giving the Local Authorities control there will be just as great a kettle of fish as there would be in Birmingham. Then the right hon. Gentleman took our main objection to the proposals of the Government out of our mouths when he said that there ought to be an Irish authority between the individual tenant on the one hand and the Imperial Exchequer on the other. That is the basis of our opposition to the Bill. We say that nothing can be more dangerous than to bring the Imperial Exchequer into direct relations with the hundreds of thousands of small tenants in Ireland. During the recent Partick election I asked the hon. Member (Mr. Parker Smith), who now sits for that constituency, a question which he has not yet answered, whether it would be better in Glasgow to lend money to the small shopkeepers and beer sellers, or to lend it on the security of the funds of the Corporation? Her Majesty's Government seem to think that it is better to lend the money to the £4 cottiers and the small tenants of Ireland than to an Irish Exchequer or an Irish Government and the Irish nation at large. Does any hon. Gentleman think that it would be safe to lend money to these small tenants? [Mr. Sinclair: I do.] The hon. Gentleman, who is an Irishman by birth, represents a Scotch constituency, owing, perhaps, to equal ignorance of Scotch and Irish affairs, and I should say of affairs in general. No man in the possession of his senses would rather have 100,000 £4 cottiers as his debtors than a National Exchequer and Government, and if any man would he shows an absolute ignorance of the ordinary affairs of life. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham said there ought to be a buffer of the Local Authority between the tenants and the Imperial Exchequer, and he deprecated in the strongest manner bringing the Imperial Exchequer into direct relations with the individual debtors. Why have not the Government told the House what answer they have to give to the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman? Why is the House left without "light and leading" on this point? An answer must be forthcoming before the Debate closes. The Government say that they have a Local Government Bill in the pigeon-holes of their Department. Are the Government, or are they not, going to accept the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham? Is this Bill to be worked by a Local Representative Authority, or by the landlords sitting on the Grand Jury? I do not want to make too strong a charge against the Government as to their relations with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, and I suppose they know their own business best; but I say that if it is respectful to the right hon. Gentleman it is not respectful to this House that, having this suggestion made to them in the course of the Debate, not one of them should get up to give an emphatic reply on the question, aye or no. I hope this point will not be allowed to drop, and that every hon. Member who follows me from these benches will repeat the question until we receive an answer. Supposing the Bill is passed in its present form—which would not be the case if I had my way, because I think it is a thoroughly bad Bill, brought in by a thoroughly bad Government, and backed by a thoroughly bad House of Commons; but if it is not amended in the direction indicated by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, we shall find that the Grand Juries in Ireland will be asked to make a rate for schools, lunatic asylums, medical relief, and other purposes. Do the Government think that the Grand

Jury will make the rate, or, if they make it, that the ratepayers will pay it? The Chief Secretary for Ireland is living in a fool's paradise with regard to this question. Hon. Members point to the regular payments made by the Ashbourne tenants. But I should like to ask the hon. Member for the Falkirk District whether those tenants were not Nationalists before they bought their lands, and whether he thinks they have become less Nationalists since they bought their holdings?

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): Certainly not.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: What does the Chief Secretary think of this interruption on the part of the hon. Member? The whole basis of the Government policy is, that land purchase destroys Nationalism.

(11.27.) MR. SINCLAIR: I said on a former occasion that while I believe the creation of a tenant proprietorship under the Ashbourne Acts and under this Act would have no effect in diminishing the desire of the Irish tenant who became a proprietor to obtain legitimate local control of local affairs, yet I did believe that it would have a great effect in diminishing that which is the danger of Nationalist proceedings—a desire to become a separate nation, and distinct from the British Empire. I hold most strongly that the Irish tenant, whether a Nationalist or not, when he has entered into a fair bargain desires to keep the terms of that bargain as an Irishman and not as a Nationalist.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I think that the hon. Gentleman has scarcely improved his position by what he now says, because no one sitting on the Irish Benches is in favour of separation. According to the views of the Government, anyone who is in favour of a moderate form of Home Rule is a Separatist. But the point I wish to urge is this: that those tenants who were Nationalists before they became owners of the land have remained Nationalists after they became owners; and, therefore, the whole basis of the Unionist policy in passing such a Bill as this is destroyed, because that basis is that the ownership of land converts a Nationalist into what is called a Loyalist. The Government hold that the whole political question in Ireland will be removed the moment the agrarian difficulty is settled. Well, I would recommend the Chief Secretary to pay attention to the statements of one of his supporters, and to convince himself that even after he has passed such a measure as this he will still have the National question to deal with. Hon. Gentlemen think that this Bill will limit the area of discontent. On the contrary, it will widen the area of possible repudiation. If these tenants buy under compulsion from the landlord, backed by Removable Magistrates and by a perpetual Coercion Law, there is no sanctity in the contract. I will go further, and say that if a tenant who has entered into a bargain under this Bill with his eyes open can, by a temporary postponement of his payments to this country, aid in turning the present Government out of office, he will be morally justified in adopting such a course. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Hear, hear!"] Hon. Members meet that statement with cries of dissent. That they should do so is curious, considering that in this country every Nihilist from Russia can find a most enthusiastic welcome, even though dynamite has been employed by him against his Sovereign with the object of securing reforms. The Chief Secretary smiles, suggesting, perhaps, that I have advocated the use of dynamite. I have never done so.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I made no suggestion.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: If the right hon. Gentleman has anything to say he ought to take his hands out of his pockets and stand up. After all, the right hon. Gentleman is not an Irremovable Magistrate trying an Irish prisoner. A great deal has been said about the Ashbourne tenants, but everything has not been said about them yet. We read recently in the *Times* about the boycotting of a railway by a certain number of tenants, and among those who, according to the veracious *Times*, encouraged this boycotting are the tenants of an Ashbourne estate. Then, there is the Tenants' Defence Fund, which amounts now to £60,000. To this Fund the County of Cork is the largest contributor, and in that county the largest subscription but one has come from a parish where stands the estate of Lord Shannon, whose tenants are buying him out under the Ashbourne Act. And I am told there is a case of precisely similar character in Queen's County. These large subscriptions, it would appear, do not come from rack-rented tenants, but from comfortable, prosperous, and "loyalist" tenants, who have become owners under the Ashbourne Act. Why, then, this delusion about the tenure of land making any difference in the Nationalist principles of Ireland? It is a fallacy which by this time should have been exploded even in a Unionist mind as impervious to impressions as that of the hon. Member for the Falkirk Burghs. Why, every single Land Act passed by the Imperial Parliament has immediately resulted in an enormous increase of strength to the Nationalist Party; and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary never in his life harboured a greater mistake than he does now, if he believes that the present Purchase Act will have the least effect in diminishing the Nationalist cause in Ireland. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has told us that the present House of Commons is morally incompetent to pass a Land Purchase Bill involving the credit of the State, and the statement has been contradicted on the opposite side of the House. But I could quote speech after speech made by hon. Members opposite at the time of the General Election in which land purchase in any shape involving Imperial credit in any form was condemned and repudiated. Does anyone who went through the General Election of 1886 forget that? The action of the Government and of the whole Party opposite is as glaring a piece of wholesale mendacity as this country ever witnessed. There are men opposite whose election placards can be produced calling for votes on the cry of "No Coercion," and "No Land Purchase," and yet these men have voted for coercion, and are now about to vote for land purchase. Election speeches, it would seem, are only good until Parliament is elected, and are forgotten the moment Parliament has come into existence. This Land Purchase Bill is on a level with the election pledges of 1886. The hon. Member for Peckham (Mr. Baumann), in his election address, referred to the Land Purchase Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and said that three years previously the right hon. Gentleman put the cost of buying out the Irish landlords at between £300,000,000 and £400,000,000. I have here an election placard inscribed "Vote for Weymouth and No Coercion," and another on which appears—

> "Do not vote for Samuelson. He would increase the taxes on your beer and bread by giving millions of English money to buy out the Irish landlords."

Well, the Marquess of Bath, the father of the Gentleman who was elected on this placard, got £225,000 under the Ashbourne Act for his Irish estates. I return to the hon. Member for Peckham. Does he adhere to the estimate I have mentioned of the amount that is required? [Mr. Baumann indicated assent.] Well then, what is the meaning of offering this paltry £40,000,000? Let them bring in a Bill for £300,000,000 or £400,000,000. Then they will be honest, and then they will cease to be the Tory Government. The hon. Member for Chester (Mr. Yerburgh) also at the time of that election entered into a calculation of the number of railway lorries it would take to carry the gold with which Mr. Gladstone intended to buy out the Irish landlords. And it was on statements like these—which I dare not characterise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless you should call me to order—that the majority of this House were elected. No House of Commons ever had a baser origin than the present one, and if the Party opposite had any candour in their nature they would rise in repentance and apologise to the constituencies, and especially to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. Compare this tinkering and botching measure with the Bill of 1886. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has spoken of the net rental, and has calculated that the difference between the gross and net rentals is 8 per cent.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is not my calculation. In order to make my statement clear I gave two illustrations. I gave one in which the difference was 7 per cent., but I stated that that was not the average for the whole of Ireland. As far as I can discover, from the facts at my command, the average difference all over Ireland is about 3¼ per cent.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I am very glad to hear that from the right hon. Gentleman. It makes my case a good deal stronger. I must go back to 1886 again. I apologise to Gentlemen opposite. I am sure the recollection is painful to them. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said at that time, and they have been saying ever since—"Talk of the Liberal Government being the friend of the Irish tenant. Why, those miserable hypocrites actually proposed 20 years' purchase of the rentals of Irish land, throwing the most exorbitant burden on the Irish tenant. If you want to find the real friend of the Irish tenant, go to the Chief Secretary, who only asks 17 years." Yes, 17 years, plus two years of arrears, and plus the average reduction between the gross rental and the net rental. I have not the slightest doubt that if the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has the picking of the Land Commission, the purchase will be a 22 years' purchase. I am glad to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his place. He seemed to me the other night to be labouring under an extraordinary want of the power of discrimination. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian said that under this Bill there would be State relations between the Exchequer on the one side and the tenant on the other, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that under the Bill of 1886 there was also a State authority. But does he not see that there is all the difference between the relations of the tenant with a State friendly to him and a State hostile to him? In the State hostile to the tenant, you have a State with a perpetual Coercion Act in its hand, and you have nothing but feelings of the bitterest and most vehement hostility. Under the scheme of 1886 every penny of rent would have been collected by an Irish policeman, armed with powers by an Irish Court, sent by an Irish Minister, and backed by Irish public opinion. Under that scheme, Irish liberty was the hostage of Irish honesty. The tenant who did not pay would be imperilling the liberties of his own nation, and he would, therefore, be a traitor against the liberties of his own country, and public opinion would back the authorities in bringing him to his senses. A man sent to prison under that Bill would have been regarded as a traitor going to prison to purge his contempt; whilst under this Bill he would be looked upon as a man going to prison to help in restoring the liberties of his country. Unless this Bill restores peace in Ireland it would have been better that it should not have been brought in at all. How can it be said that a Bill which, to put it at the highest, will only deal with one-fourth of the tenancies, can restore peace? The measure is meant to serve for the year that must elapse between this and the General Election. It is meant to show that purchase in Ireland can be carried out for a small sum, and is, therefore, intended to throw dust in the eyes of the country. We shall vote against it with a perfectly light heart. Our people can afford to wait. Land is going down in the Irish market every day, and when we come to deal with it, it will not be at 17, but at 10 or 12 years' purchase. We oppose this Bill, therefore, feeling perfectly secure that in no way shall we interfere by so doing with the interests of the people. If the right hon. Gentleman doubts that we are representing the feelings of the people, I invite him to give us the opportunity of testing it. We oppose the Bill with a light heart, because it will not be a settlement of the relations between England and Ireland, and it is our most anxious desire to have those relations placed on a satisfactory and tranquil footing. The Bill will create discontent. It will widen the area of disturbance, and, instead of making easy the relations between England and Ireland, it will give further opportunities for misunderstanding.

(11.53.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Hayes Fisher*,) put, and agreed to.

Debate further adjourned till To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

KEW AND PETERSHAM VICARAGE BILL.—(No. 229).

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [25th April] "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

(11.54.) MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): I think some explanation should be given of this Bill. It appears to be a scheme made by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for dividing the vicarage into two parts. I do not know why this should be done, and, I think we ought to have some reason given to us. The vicarage is now vested in the hands of King's College, Cambridge. I do not think it is competent for the House now to go into the matter. It is close upon 12 o'clock, and I beg to move the adjournment of the Debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Dillwyn.*)

*(11.55.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I assure my hon. Friend that there is nothing very serious in this matter. The patronage of the vicarage is in the Crown. The village of Petersham is some distance from Kew, and it is desirable that the two vicarages should be separated. That can only be done by an Act of Parliament.

MR. DILLWYN: I rise to order, Sir. I moved the adjournment of the Debate, and the right hon. Gentleman is now discussing the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I understood that the right hon. Gentleman wished for an explanation, and I was, therefore, willing to allow him to go on.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The explanation is so simple on the face of the Bill itself, that I hope the hon. Gentleman will withdraw his opposition. It is a matter of the very smallest importance.

MR. DILLWYN; We are always told that these matters are of the smallest importance, but we sometimes find, when they have been passed, that they are of the greatest importance. I must, therefore, persist in my Motion.

(11.57.) House cleared for Division, but Motion agreed to without a Division.

Debate further adjourned till To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [25th April] reported.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £400,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to pay off and discharge Exchequer Bonds (Cape Railway) that will become due and payable during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891."

Resolution agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1890-91.

CLASS V.

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £17,640, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for the Expenses of Various Services (other than Consular) in connection with the Suppression of the Slave Trade, and the Expenses of the Liberated African Department."

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): A discussion arose in Committee upon this Vote on a very important question: contract labour; but you, Sir, on the Motion regarding the Steamship Companies, ruled the discussion out of order. Does this ruling apply to the whole Vote?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not think I ever allowed it. It is quite out of order.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Order read, for consideration of Postponed Resolution [1st April],

> "That a sum, not exceeding £33,993, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for expenditure in respect of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, and for the maintenance of certain Cemeteries Abroad."

Resolution agreed to.

SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' DISABILITIES REMOVAL (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 66.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 7.)

Order for Committee read.

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I have been asked to defer this Bill until some day in June, and I propose to put down the Committee for the 25th of that month, if the House will allow the Bill to go into Committee *pro formâ* now.

MR. NOLAN: I object.

Bill deferred till to-morrow.

INTESTATES' ESTATES BILL.—(No. 59.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 2.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

SUPERANNUATIONS (OFFICERS OF COUNTY COUNCILS) BILL.—(No. 134.)

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I hope the House will allow this Bill to be read a second time, and discuss its details in Committee. It is not a "Pension's Bill" as generally understood, but it is one to enable County Councils to provide a fund, by deductions from salaries and wages of officers and servants in their employment, and to grant superannuation. Allowances, therefrom, adding from their own funds such contributions as may be necessary.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devises): This Bill, so far as the principle goes, is one the House might very well consider, but, as the hon. Member will see, he proposes to cast upon County Councils certain obligatory regulations in reference to their officers, and manifestly I think we ought not to decide until County Councils have had an opportunity of considering the proposal, and of making some representation upon it. So far, although the question has been, more or less, before the County Councils of England and Wales, only three have made any representations on the subject. Under these circumstances, I do not think we ought to pass the Second Reading until the subject has been more fully considered.

Second Reading deferred till 13th May.

MOTION.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Bill to amend the Law relating to Savings Banks, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 240.]

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 29th April, 1890.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 59.)

Read 3^{a} (according to order), and passed.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, That the Committee have added the Earl of Kimberley to the Standing Committee for Bills relating to Law, &c., for the consideration of the Industrial Schools Bill, the Reformatory Schools Bill, and the Juvenile Offenders Bill. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 29th April, 1890.

The House met at Two of the clock.

QUESTIONS.

THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW AT FOLKESTONE.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary for War if he has informed himself of the reasons why regular troops were kept in barracks, and not allowed to take part in the recent operations by the Volunteers at and near Folkestone?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): I think I cannot do better than read the explanation which the general officer commanding at Dover has furnished. He says—

> "The original programme that the Volunteer marching column was to come to Dover (in which case manœuvring ground for them and the Dover and Shorncliffe garrisons would have been provided by the town) was altered by the Volunteers electing to go to Folkestone. The officer commanding the Volunteers then went to Folkestone and made private arrangements for ground for his force to manœuvre on on Saturday and Easter Monday. This precluded the presence of Regulars, the ground found by Folkestone being only for the small force under the officer commanding Scots Guards, and this was clearly understood at a previous meeting in the presence of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief. As, however, Colonel Hozier's Volunteer Artillery were not prepared to march to Folkestone from Dover, I decided on placing a battery of Field Artillery at Colonel Stracey's disposal to take their place, and sent a troop of Hussars to assist him in keeping the ground."

THE LATE GENERAL SIR W. JONES.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary for War whether he has further inquired as to the refusal of a military funeral (as desired by that distinguished General) to the remains of General Jones, G.C.B., and what further information is to be imparted to the House; and if the statements in the *Times* are correct, what apology or reparation is to be offered to the General's friends and comrades in arms? I also wish to know whether the attention of the hon. Gentleman has been directed to a letter from Mrs. Griffiths, a sister of the late General Jones, in which she states that all the arrangements for the funeral were made on the understanding that it was to be a military funeral, and that the countermand only came the night before the funeral was to take place?

MR. BRODRICK: The Secretary of State for War has already explained that the Regulations did not admit of a military funeral for the remains of the late Sir William Jones, and if the inadvertent promise of one by the Local Authorities before they had consulted Headquarters has been the cause of pain or annoyance to the family of the deceased officer, I can only say that no one can regret it more than the Staff in Dublin and those in authority at the War Office.

INDIA—EXPENDITURE IN GWALIOR.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has yet received any information from the Government of India respecting the question asked on 8th April of last year, respecting the number of highly-paid officials in Gwalior, and the desire of the Regency that they should be dismissed; whether he is aware that the sum of 20 lakhs per annum is being expended on the maintenance of the so-called Public Works Department at Gwalior; whether all buildings and main and feeder roads of any value have been completed; whether there has been any effective audit or checking of the accounts of the Department during the past three years, when nearly a crore of rupees has been expended; and whether, in regard to this State, the Ruler of which is still a minor, the Government of India will use its influence to prevent the continuance of this expenditure.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In reply to the first question of the hon. Member, I have to say that the hon. Member himself asked on the 8th of April, 1889, whether the Secretary of State was aware that Mr. Henvay, the Agent of the Governor General, on the 5th of March met the Maharajah of Gwalior, and, in deference to the wishes of His Highness and of the Council of Regency, arranged that a number of the highly-paid foreign officials should leave Gwalior. The Secretary of State was informed by the Government of India on the 28th of June, 1889, that there was no foundation for the statement made, and that during Mr. Henvay's visit to Gwalior no reference was made by the Maharajah, by the Mahareni Regent, or any of the members of the Council of Regency, to the employment of highly-paid foreign officials. The answer to the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative. The expenditure on public works is about 20 laks per annum. The answer to the third question is in the negative. All the works of value have not been completed. The answer to the fourth paragraph is that the Secretary of State has no information as to the audit of the accounts of the Gwalior State. The answer to the fifth paragraph is that the Government of India will use its efforts in the State of Gwalior, as in every other Native State in India, to discourage expenditure which is not for the benefit of the people.

THE CRAWFORD CASE AND THE MAMLATDARS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India

whether the Secretary of State is aware that, in addition to the documents given in the recent Return, East India (Crawford Case), there have been Notes, Memorials, Opinions, and Reports to the Bombay Government and to the Government of India respectively, from various high officials, relating to the pledge given to the incriminated Mamlatdars, to induce them to give evidence; and, if so, whether he can state their tenor and effect; and whether he will lay such further documents upon the Table of this House?

SIR J. GORST: In the Papers already presented to Parliament the Government of India gives an account of these Memorials, their tenor and effect and its reason for not forwarding them to the Secretary of State. As the Secretary of State has not received the documents he cannot lay them on the Table. He considers the reasons given by the Government of India for not forwarding them satisfactory.

THE CHIN-LUSHAI EXPEDITION.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I wish to put a question to the Under Secretary of State for India of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether the information now received from the Government of India as to the sickness enables him to correct the answer which he gave to a question addressed to him on the 24th of February, that the accounts of the sickness prevailing in the Expedition had been greatly exaggerated.

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; I am not able to say that more recent information has produced in the mind of the Secretary of State that alteration of opinion which the hon. Member appears to expect.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Does not the information which the right hon. Gentleman has been good enough to furnish me with, show that in the months of December, January, and February a very large number of British officers and British troops were sick? Take, for example, the 21st of December, when 50 men of the Scottish Borderers were sick and 13 out of 49 officers. Under those circumstances, does not the right hon. Gentleman think that my question fairly represented the state of health of the troops at the time I put the question?

Sir J. GORST: The hon. Member is now asking me for my opinion; but I must leave that subordinate to the opinion of the Secretary of State.

THE BRISTOL PILOTS.

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Bristol Pilotage Authority have raised any objection to the application made to the Board of Trade by the Bristol pilots for a Provisional Order under "The Merchant Shipping Act (Pilotage) Act, 1889," making provision for the direct representation of the pilots on the Pilotage Committee of the Authority; and, if so, on what grounds?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): The Bristol Pilotage Authority, to whom the general application of the Bristol pilots for a Provisional Order was, in pursuance of the Act, referred, have replied generally that the application of the pilots seems to point to the constitution of a new Pilotage Authority, upon which the pilots, and, if it seems expedient, shipowners also may have direct representation; and that if the Provisional Order to exempt vessels from being obliged to employ pilots in a part of the Bristol pilotage district for which the Corporation have applied becomes law, the Corporation would not object to the establishment of a new Pilotage Authority, provided the interests of the city are sufficiently represented thereon, and that provision is made for the expenses of such Authority from some other source than the Borough Fund, from which all the expenses of the present Authority are paid. The Draft Provisional Order in which the specific proposals of the pilots are embodied has, however, been only very recently received from them, and sufficient time has not yet elapsed to obtain the definite observations or objections of the Pilotage Authority thereon.

THE QUEEN'S STUD.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Minister of Agriculture why none of the Queen's premiums stallions have been allotted to District D, which comprises the 10 important counties of Berks, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hants, Kent, Somerset, Surrey, Sussex, and Wilts; whether he is aware that the Royal Agricultural Society of England have subsidised the above district with three stallions for this season only; and whether he will undertake that the said counties shall have their fair share of the 22 Queen's premiums stallions next year?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Chaplin, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): The reason why none of the stallions which won the Queen's premiums have been allotted to District D is that their place is taken this year by the winners of the prizes given by the Royal Agricultural Society. Twenty-two Queen's premiums are annually given by the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding, and three by the Royal Agricultural Society, the two bodies working in conjunction. The winners of the prizes offered by the Royal Agricultural Society are located for the season in the district in which the Society's show is held, which is this year District D. This arrangement has hitherto been found to work satisfactorily. Next year stallions which have won the Queen's premiums will be allotted to the district referred to by the hon. Member.

H.M.S. *VICTORIA* AND H.M.S. *TRAFALGAR*

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is true that Admiral Hoskins, prior to taking over the command in the Mediterranean, caused alterations to be made in his own private cabins of H.M.S. *Victoria*, at an extra cost of £2,000, and that Lord Walter Kerr has had similar alterations made on board the *Trafalgar*, at an increased cost of £4,000; and whether, if true, these alterations were sanctioned by the Admiralty?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): The statements to which the hon. Gentleman calls my attention are both untrue. No alterations were made in the admiral's private cabins on board the *Victoria*; but this ship, as is customary with flagships of a high freeboard, was when selected to carry the flag of the commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean fitted with a stern walk, at a cost of £593. No alterations have been made in the admiral's cabin on board the *Trafalgar* since 1887, when a re-arrangement of the bulkheads was carried out, while the ship was in course of construction, in consequence of a representation from the Admiral Superintendent of Portsmouth Dockyard, that the cabins as designed were inadequate. This change entailed but little cost. It has been recently found that in the case of all low-freeboard ships, such as the *Trafalgar*, a cabin for the captain and admiral is required on the upper deck in immediate proximity to the bridge. The *Trafalgar*, therefore, in common with ships of her class, has been so fitted at a cost of £69 for each cabin.

H.M.S. *ANSON.*

MR. GOURLEY: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can give the House any information relative to the cause of the carrying away of H.M.S. *Anson's* port cable when the squadron under Rear Admiral Tracey's command were weighing anchor in Vigor Bay on the 10th instant; and if he can state the size of the cable, and when and at what strain it was tested prior to being put on board; and how long the vessel was detained in consequence of the accident?

LORD G. HAMILTON: Information has been received at the Admiralty as to the breaking of the port cable of the *Anson*, when anchoring in Vigo Bay, on April 10. The accident appears to have been due to a failure in the action of the compressor, the brake of which set itself up before the anchor reached the bottom, the sudden jerk breaking the chain. Inquiry is now being made into the circumstances. The cable in question was $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches thick, and the proof strain to which it was subjected before delivery by the contractors in 1885 was $101\frac{1}{2}$ tons. The cable was surveyed in November, 1889, and was hen reported to be in a very good ndition. The official Report of the ccident does not state whether the movements of the ship were delayed in consequence.

PORT OF CHUNGKING.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can confirm the correctness of a telegram that appeared in the *Times* of 5th April relative to the opening of the Port of Chunking, in Western China, to British trade, and whether from this date British goods will be admitted into Chunking free of all further taxation after payment of the one Import Duty in Shanghai; whether the sale of Mr. Little's steamer to the Chinese Government had been effected with the knowledge of Her Majesty's Minister in China; and, if so, whether the right, held under the Chefoo Convention, of British steamers to run to the Port of Chungking, has been waived until such time as the Chinese themselves shall run steamers to that port; whether, in opening the port, arrangements have been made for the setting aside of a piece of ground for the occupation by British residents, as has been done in Hankow and other places; whether the Government has retained the right to send men-of-war to visit the port from time to time, as is the custom in the other Treaty Ports of China and Japan; and whether he can give the House any information as to the probability of British merchants eventually being permitted to run steamers to this new Treaty Port?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Generally the purport of the telegram in the *Times* of April 5th is correct, but the Article will not come into force until the ratifications have been exchanged at Peking. The text of the Article is on its way to this country, and will be published after ratification. The answer to the second paragraph of the question is in the affirmative. It is not possible to reply to the remaining paragraphs of the question until the text of the Article has been examined in this country.

GAS COMPANIES—PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, in the event of it being brought to the knowledge of the Board that certain members of Corporations are directors and shareholders in Gas Companies situate within the jurisdiction of such Corporations, whether, in pursuance of the powers vested in the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts to dispense with the consents of the Local Authorities, this would be deemed a sufficient reason for the Board to dispense with the consents of such Local Authorities, and grant Provisional Orders to other undertakers, who might be applying for Provisional Orders in the district affected?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The mere fact that certain members of Local Authorities are shareholders in Gas Companies within the district of the Local Authority would not of itself be deemed a sufficient reason to justify the Board of Trade in dispensing with the consent of such Local Authorities to Provisional Orders applied for by private promoters. If, however, it could be shown that the refusal of a Local Authority to give their consent is due to the votes of any members who were improperly influenced in giving those votes, by their personal interest in local gas undertakings, I should be disposed to consider the expediency of directing an inquiry into an application to dispense with that consent.

ARMENIA.

MR. FRANCIS STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when it may be expected that the hitherto unpublished Papers relating to the condition of things in Armenia from 1881 to 1889 will be presented to Parliament?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I must ask the hon. Member to repeat the question on Thursday.

MEETINGS OF POST OFFICE *EMPLOYÉS.*

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the tickets for a "social gathering," "tea," "concert of vocal and instrumental music," and addresses by General Sir C. Teesdale, Coningsby Disraeli, &c., on 30th April, are being sold at the Bognor Post Office; and, if so, whether this is in accordance with Post Office Rules concerning political matters?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): In reply to the hon. Baronet I have to state that time has not admitted of my making inquiry; but upon the question itself I must remark that it contains nothing to show that the social gathering referred to has any political bearing, or that tickets for it might not be sold within a post office without any breach of rule. I should, however, have thought the hon. Baronet would have been the last person in the House to object to a "social tea."

SIR W. LAWSON: By some inadvertence a portion of the question has been omitted. It stated that this meeting was held in connection with a local habitation of the Primrose League.

*MR. RAIKES: Those words do not appear in the question.

IRISH LIGHT RAILWAYS.

MR. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that many Light Railway Schemes that have been scheduled or declared by the Privy Council to be desirable of construction have been thrown out by the refusal of Grand Juries to sanction guarantees, and also that many other proposed lines have been postponed, so that there must remain a considerable portion of the "free" grant money under the recent Act unappropriated; whether, in view and in lieu of the foregoing, the Government are prepared to recommend to the consideration of the Privy Council other proposed meritorious schemes, especially the proposed line of railway in reference to the "Leinster Coal Field," in North Kilkenny, as to which a Memorial has been long since duly lodged with the Clerk of the Privy Council, signed by over 2,000 of all classes of the inhabitants of the district; whether he is aware that the Royal Commission on Public Works (Ireland), in their Report dated 4th January, 1888, specially called attention to the remarkable absence of railway communication in regard to the "Leinster Coal Field," the strata of which contains a large deposit of anthracite coal, and whether he is further aware that the recent Naval Manœuvres have impressed the Authorities of the Admiralty with the special value of "smokeless" coal in Naval strategy; and whether, in view of the above, the Government are prepared to aid in the development of the home supply of such a valuable adjunct in Imperial Naval defence?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The cases of such of the lines already scheduled as have passed the Grand Juries are under consideration, and until a decision is arrived at as to these lines it is impossible to say how much of the money granted under the Act of 1889 will be required; and it would therefore be premature to enter upon the consideration of any schemes not already scheduled.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he proposes to take any action in view of the facts laid before him by a deputation on the 24th instant relative to the disease of tuberculosis in cattle?

Mr. CHAPLIN: Yes, Sir; I stated to the deputation that the first thing, in my judgment, to be done was to obtain an authoritative opinion as to how far and at what stages of the disease meat derived from animals suffering from tuberculosis was unfit for and dangerous as human food, and that I would consult with my right hon. Friend and my Colleagues without delay as to the most satisfactory means of obtaining such an opinion. I have taken an early opportunity of doing so, with this result: that as this is a question primarily affecting the public health, my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board proposes to institute a scientific inquiry into the question without delay.

THE BALACLAVA CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary for War whether he can state if it is a fact, as reported, that more than 30 men who took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava are now in absolute want; if so, whether any steps have been or will be taken to afford them some relief; and if any balance remains out of the Patriotic Fund, or if there is any other fund applicable to such a purpose?

Mr. BRODRICK: I must ask the hon. Member to postpone the question until my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State can be present.

Mr. Madden

THE NEW CODE.

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether Article 73 of the proposed Code is intended to be retrospective in its operations; and, if not, whether he will state what will be the position, under that Article, of teachers who, though they may have passed the examinations for their certificates under the conditions of previous Codes, have not received a course of training in a Training College?

*The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir W. Hart Dyke, Kent, Dartford): The object of the distinction to which my hon. Friend refers is to encourage teachers to go through a course of training in a Training College. Representations have, however, been made to me that the Article, as it stands, will injuriously affect the position of many teachers who have gained valuable experience by actual service, and I am, therefore, inclined to limit its operation to those teachers who pass the certificate examinations after the 1st January, 1891.

IRELAND—EVICTIONS—DEATH OF P. CRAIG.

Mr. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to the case of an evicted tenant named Patrick Craig, of Clooncara, Kilmovee, County Mayo, who was released from Castlebar Gaol on the 30th of December last, after enduring an imprisonment of two months for re-taking possession of his old home subsequent to his eviction; whether he is aware that it is alleged that, as the result of his imprisonment, Craig was compelled to take to his bed, and that he died there after much suffering on the 26th of February; whether he would say if Craig's condition in Castlebar Gaol was such as to obtain special treatment for him in hospital; and whether he will inform the House what Report in this case has been made to him by the prison doctor?

Mr. MADDEN: The General Prisons Board report that Patrick Craig when in Castlebar Prison had been treated by the medical officer for some trifling ailments, which did not necessitate his removal to the hospital, as his cell, a boarded one, was comfortable, well-aired, and warm. On the termination of his sentence he was examined in the usual way by the acting medical officer and found to be in proper health for discharge. The information before the Board does not lead to the conclusion that imprisonment had impaired Patrick Craig's health.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

Mr. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Minister for Agriculture whether he is aware that during the past year the South Dublin Union was called upon to pay £8,000 compensation for the compulsory slaughter of cattle suffering from pleuro-pneumonia; have any steps been taken to meet the views of the deputation from 100 Agricultural Clubs and Societies which waited upon him early in February to complain of similar burdens being imposed on other market centres, and dairy and grazing districts, with the object of pressing on the attention of the Government the desirability of making such payment from the Imperial Exchequer instead of the local rates; and whether he has had submitted to him a remedy by Mr. Johnson, of Blackrock, Dublin, for effectually stamping out this disease; and, if so, whether in the public interest he has caused inquiry to be made into the nature and merits of such remedy, and afforded its author an opportunity of putting it to a test; and, if so, what has been the result?

Mr. CHAPLIN: The South Dublin Union was not, I am informed, called upon to pay £8,000 during the past year as compensation for the compulsory slaughter of cattle suffering from pleuro-pneumonia. The amount so paid in that Union during the past year was £384 15s. Besides this sum, £3,502 was payable as compensation for cattle in South Dublin Union slaughtered as being in contact with cattle affected with pleuro-pneumonia, making a total of £3,886 15s. in the South Dublin Union in the past year. As to the steps which have been taken to meet the views of the deputation from 100 Agricultural Clubs and Societies, which waited upon me in February, I may remind the hon. Member that I have introduced a Bill which I have reason to believe substantially meets the views of the deputation. The Bill has been already read a second time, and I hope I may be successful shortly in passing it through its remaining stages in this House. A letter has been submitted to me from Mr. Johnston, of Blackrock, Dublin, stating that he knew of a remedy for the disease, and asking that a certain number of diseased animals should be placed at his disposal for experiment, and offering to place it at the services of the Board of Agriculture for a stipulated sum if successful. I have carefully considered the proposal. But we constantly receive applications of this character, and with no evidence of the value of the remedy before them the Board have not thought it desirable to accede to this request.

THE PONSONBY ESTATE EVICTIONS.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary for War whether he is aware that during the recent evictions on the Ponsonby Estate, near Youghal, Surgeon Raymond, of the Cameronians, was called in by the sub-sheriff to certify to the fitness or unfitness for removal of an old woman, the mother of a tenant, although a certificate of a duly qualified medical man practising in Youghal had been previously furnished to the effect that the woman was not fit to be removed; and whether an Army surgeon accompanying Her Majesty's troops on such duty is at the call of a sheriff or sub-sheriff for such a purpose?

Mr. BRODRICK: The medical officer in question did, at the request of the sub-sheriff, examine a woman and certified that she was unfit for removal. An Army surgeon is certainly not at the call of a civil official, if compliance would interfere with his proper duties; but otherwise he would be expected to give his professional advice or opinion if asked to do so in a case of illness.

Mr. BRUNNER: Arising out of the answer, may I ask whether steps will be taken to minimise the employment of our gallant soldiers in connection with disagreeable work of this character?

Mr. BRODRICK: Yes, Sir; as far as possible.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

SIR W. FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to fix a day for the discussion of the Allotments Act (1887) Amendment Bill? I think it would be greatly for the advantage of the House if a day were fixed, and that it would tend to shorten the Debate?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I hope to be able to fix the day before the House rises at this Morning or Evening Sitting. At all events, I will do so before the close of the day.

SIR W. LAWSON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Bill in reference to licences will be before the House?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope that the Bill will be circulated by Thursday next. If not, it will be in the hands of Members by Friday.

MOTION.

PHARMACY ACT (IRELAND) (1875) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Johnston, Bill to amend "The Pharmacy Act (Ireland), 1875," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Johnston, Mr. Sexton, Sir James Corry, Mr. Thomas Dickson, Sir Edward Harland, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Macartney.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 241.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

KEW AND PETERSHAM VICARAGE BILL.—(No. 229.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [25th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.

(No. 199.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [21st April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was to leave out the word "now," and, at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*(2.55.) MR. HAYES FISHER (Fulham): The only ground I can conceive for the prolongation of this debate is that hon. Members opposite may be able to agree upon some intelligible principle of action. Some years ago the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) became committed to a policy as a settlement of the land question in Ireland, but I have not yet heard any Member of the Opposition say that he is satisfied with the settlement as created by the Land Act of 1881. The nearest approach to an assertion of that kind came from the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt), last night, when he told us that he did not think dual ownership was at all a necessary evil. Neither do we think so, but the right hon. Gentleman laid down the conditions under which alone dual ownership can work in Ireland, or in any other country, namely, that the advantages can only be brought out by the dual owners dealing fairly by each other. The right hon. Gentleman went on to tell the House that that Act has failed to secure peace to Ireland and to bring contentment in its train, even upon such estates as those of Mr. Olphert and Lord Lansdowne, on which it has been most recently brought into operation. We have, therefore, to look ahead, and we say that it was the inevitable consequence of the Act of 1881, that during a certain stated term of years the question between the two partners in the property should be re-opened. But in certain parts of Ireland, where there is not that fair dealing between the two partners, to which reference was made earlier in the debate, how can the House expect any definite settlement of the question? No one has risen in this House to say that he sees in the settlement of 1881 anything like a permanent agrarian policy of this country with regard to Ireland; and, therefore, we are justified in calling in some auxiliary aid to settle the Irish land question. I am far from saying that dual ownership has not worked well in

certain parts of Ireland, but this has been mainly in those parts which have not been disturbed by agrarian disputes between landlord and tenant. We have, however, to look to other parts of Ireland, and the only policy which has met with any success in the somewhat more disturbed portions of the country has been a Land Purchase policy. That is the policy the Government are trying to carry further by means of this Bill. They are not acting without experience on their side. They have already taken two steps towards a Land Purchase policy in 1885 and 1888, by the passing of the Ashbourne Acts. Now it is proposed to take a big stride towards the same end; and the experiment of 1890 is fully justified by the experience which has been gained from the passing of those Acts, but I cannot believe that any agrarian scheme can be a good scheme which it is necessary, year after year, to doctor. The only way to settle the Irish question in the more disturbed portions of the country, and to end the difficulties arising from the dual system of ownership established by the Act of 1881, is, in my opinion, to extend the single ownership system begun by the Acts of 1885 and 1888. A great deal has been said as to the success which attended the system of Land Purchase from the point of view of restoring social order, and the great benefits which have been secured from the operation of the Acts in certain districts; but I do not think sufficient has been heard of the great results which have been derived from the fact that the tenants have been induced to extract the extreme value from the land. By restoring single ownership in land there is no longer a conflict of interests. I have received reports from persons who have gone over estates on which the Ashbourne Act has come into operation, which show that the tenants,. since purchasing the land, have made improvements which have added considerably to the value of the security. They have kept the land in good order, have made fences, and added to the comfort of their homesteads. Many of them who had not cattle before now have them. On Lord Normanton's estate in Tipperary, which has recently been purchased by the tenants, there is great prosperity. An interesting report from a friend of mine states that according to the parish priest of Emly, milch cows have increased by 250 in that dstirict.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Upon what estate?

Mr. HAYES FISHER: Mainly on the estate purchased from Lord Normanton. And I think it will be found that the new purchasers are displaying much more intelligence, and taking a much more active interest in the question of taxation. That is a result which will greatly facilitate the successful operation of a Local Government Bill. Men who, in 1887, had no cows now have several, while others have increased their stock greatly. From reports of this kind we may fairly draw two deductions; first, that the manner in which these tenants are cultivating their farms has added greatly to the value of the security upon which the country is advancing its money. Every improvement made is an improvement of the security, so that in numerous instances the security will be much larger than when the money was advanced. The second deduction is, that, when we add to the marketable produce of a district, or of Ireland as a whole, we add to the general prosperity of the country. One great objection to the manner in which these advances are secured was stated by the hon. Member for Cork. He said that, supposing these aristocratic tenant farmers made default in their payments, the State would recoup itself by taking funds and taxation which were the property of the neighbourhood, including many not interested in the advances. But if it can be shown that the purchase system has largely extended the general prosperity of the district and of the country at large, then we have a weighty argument for saying that, as the benefit has been shared to a certain extent by the people of Ireland generally, so the penalty for default must also be shared. With regard to the default in the payments to be made by the tenants, it would be either accidental, economic, or wilful, and probably political. If the default were accidental, arising from agricultural depression, then the Insurance Fund would probably meet the case. If economic, as through being caused by general famine, then Great Britain, as in 1847, would put her hand in her pocket and come to the relief of Ireland. If default arose from any other cause it would be wilful and political, and this country could enforce its guarantees. I do not think that the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) has made a worthy contribution to this debate. No doubt, as the responsible editor of a newspaper, which referred to the Bill as "The Idiot Bill" before it had been seen, we could hardly expect from the hon. Member criticism which would be worthy of notice at any length, even by a young Member like myself. The remark I will make upon the hon. Member's speech is that the impotency of its criticism was only equalled by the potency of its language, and the single striking thing about it was the threatening attitude adopted towards the hon. Member for the Falkirk Burghs (Mr. W. Sinclair). There was, however, one observation of the hon. Member with regard to repudiation which I will refer to for a moment. The hon. Member actually declared that he thought the tenants of Ireland would be morally justified in refusing payment of the instalments which they have deliberately and voluntarily undertaken to pay, if by so doing they could only manage to turn out the Government. That may be the morality of the *Star*, but it is not the morality of British statesmen. What would be the situation if there was any general repudiation? It would be limited to those over whom hon. Members opposite have political power, and would not extend to the farmers of Ulster. What, in that case, would the British taxpayer say? I am sure that my own constituents, looking to the fact that these men have received 30 per cent reduction, and that they have availed themselves of the option offered them, would say to those responsible for the government of Ireland, "Enforce with all your might and power every guarantee you have taken against such dishonest men." I refuse, however, to believe that the tenants of Ireland, even under the guidance of hon. Members opposite, would ever take such a course as that. I do not in any case think the Government need have any serious difficulty with the question, as the favourable terms on which the farms would be offered to incoming tenants would produce a healthy competition for them. At any rate, I am prepared to take the risk. It would, however, be to the interests of the tenants themselves, for the sake of their own pockets, to maintain the integrity of the contract. Then it is said that it would be impossible to enforce the guarantees, and the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool stated that, although a Grand Jury might make a rate, the people would never pay it. I have in my own mind instances where taxes have been violently denounced, and yet not much difficulty has been experienced in the collection of them. I would ask hon. Members opposite to give me a single instance in which the authorities have been unable to collect a tax.

MR. E. HARRINGTON: The Police Tax at Limerick.

MR. HAYES FISHER: One of the most interesting relics in my possession is one of the green placards posted in the neighbourhood of Mitchelstown calling on the people on no account to pay the so-called "blood tax," levied in consequence of the unhappy occurrences there a few years ago. That tax, nevertheless, was collected without any very great difficulty, being paid sometimes after dark, sometimes under divers cloaks and covers, as so many rates and taxes in Ireland are paid. Experience, therefore, would lead us to believe that this rate also, which would be imposed by the Grand Jury, would be collected without great difficulty. With reference to the suggestion of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), I think, speaking for myself, that the experience of the existing Ashbourne Acts proves that it is better to deal direct with the tenants than with the Local Authority. On that question, however, I will keep an open mind. If the speech of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham is reckoned by the Opposition as being against the Bill, I claim the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) as being distinctly in its favour.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Quite the contrary.

MR. HAYES FISHER: There were some valuable comments in the speech of the hon. Member as to dealing with the congested districts, and this Bill, whatever its defects, embodies the only scheme ever put forward for solving that great problem in a practical way.

MR. DILLON: My plan was altogether on different lines.

MR. HAYES FISHER: The Bill of the Government has been described as a measure to buy out landlords, but it may more truly be described as a Bill to buy in tenants, and it is impossible to set up a peasant proprietary in a fair and honest way without buying out the landlords. Hon. Members have joined in a general denunciation of absentee landlords, but is the 8th Commandment to be limited in its applicability, and not to apply to absentee landlords? If not, you must deal with them in a fair manner. Then, again, the complaint is that this is an oppressive Bill, and it is said that the tenants will be coerced into buying at extravagant rates; but that complaint was corrected by other speakers, who say that it will be compulsory and oppressive upon the landlords. For my own part, I do not think it will be either the one or the other. There may be a good deal of pressure put on some of the landlords to sell, but it is a pressure which is not altogether unknown in England. A small landlord, with no other means of obtaining a livelihood, finds himself sandwiched between two large landlords at a time when agriculture is much depressed. The wealthy landlords make large reductions of rent to their tenants, but he cannot afford to do so. If he is a good landlord, taking a general interest in everything that goes on in the locality, he will be able to stand his ground and remain there. And so it will be in Ireland. If a good landlord is pressed to sell he will say, "No, I cannot afford to accept your price," and he will remain there for generations to come. I myself can have very little sympathy with tenants who desire to force landlords to sell at a price at which they cannot afford to sell. Nor, can a policy of this kind be carried out without British credit, and I claim that, the object being a great national object—the settlement, complete or partial, of the Irish agrarian problem—it is one in which it is perfectly legitimate to employ, and even to risk, to a certain extent, British credit. If we are able to settle the agrarian problem, we shall have gone a long way towards the settlement of the great Irish question, and it is because I believe that this Bill is the corner-stone of a great agrarian policy for Ireland that I heartily support it, and, so far as my own constituents are concerned, I am only too glad to take the risk incurred in the adoption of it.

(3.20.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do not attach much importance to the eloquence of hon. Members sitting immediately behind the Treasury Bench, because I find that they are utterly wanting in independence. No matter what a Minister proposes, they rain down blessings on his head, or if they do criticise, they do not give practical effect to their criticisms by their votes. I oppose this Bill because I am against the Imperial credit being used, in whatever form or shape, for the object aimed at. The policy adopted in the last few years for Ireland has been a policy of kicks and ha'pence. I have been opposed to the kicks; I am equally opposed to the ha'pence. The ha'pence are, perhaps, more demoralising, and would more lower the patriotic fibre of Irishmen than the kicks. I do not admit that all the industries of this country should incur heavy liabilities for the sake of one industry; still less do I admit that all the industries of this country should incur heavy liabilities for the sake of persons exercising one particular industry in one particular part of the Empire. We are told that we have grossly ill-treated Ireland; that we have sacrificed her interests for our own; and the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) has pointed out that by the apportionment of the National Debt at the time of the Union, Ireland was unfairly dealt with. That may be all very true; but whether this measure is injurious to Ireland, or not, I shall equally vote against it, on the ground that if the Bill becomes law, we must inevitably become the owners of the whole of that country. Whether regarded from a political or from a financial aspect it must prove ruinous to Ireland, because the landlords, having got the price of their land in their pockets, would immediately come to England, and the result would be that we should set up a great system of absenteeism. What would be the consequence if the whole of the rents of the English land were taken over to France? Why, the people would not stand it, and they would repudiate any arrangement which led to such a consequence. I cannot help thinking that too much importance has been attached to the scheme that has been proposed by the hon. Member for Cork, because it was evidently only put forward as an alternative to that of the Government. Perhaps if it were a mere matter of Hobson's choice between the schemes of the Government and of the hon. Member for Cork I might prefer the latter, because it is cheaper and seems to be of a more final character than that of the Government. At the same time, however, I am bound to say that I object entirely to both proposals. The proposal of the hon. Member is to subsidise the landlords by converting the 6 per cent. interest which they now pay upon their mortgages into a 2¾ per cent. interest by means of an Imperial guarantee. The advances which have been made by the State to the English landlords have been expended in effecting permanent improvements in the land, whereby the whole community is benefited, whereas the advances that are to be made to the Irish landlords under this Bill would be applied to wiping out second mortgages, the proceeds of which have already been expended and wasted, and would thus be of no benefit whatever to the community at large. In such circumstances the State would naturally fall into the position of the second mortgagees, and it would have to pay off the first mortgagees if it wished to realise its security by foreclosing. Therefore, before the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork can be accepted it would have to be modified in many respects, and even then it would not do any great good to the people of Ireland. But the right hon Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has also come forward with an alternative scheme of his own. The right hon. Gentleman appears to have a perfect mania for propounding land schemes, whether he happens to be sitting at a Round Table, standing on a platform, writing to a newspaper, or speaking in this House. The right hon. Gentleman does not appear to be able to pass three months of his existence without putting forward some new scheme for Land Purchase in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman is a sort of Solon unattached —a heaven-born legislator—and he is highly indignant when anybody else has the effrontery to come forward with any other scheme, and he asks, "Why do they look at that other man's scheme when they have a man like me with not only one but a dozen schemes ready cut and dried?" I hope that the Government, following the example set them on this side of the House, will treat the right hon. Gentleman's schemes with the most absolute contempt. The right hon. Gentleman represents no one but himself. I should like to know whether the followers of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) approve of the schemes of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, and will pursue them to their logical conclusion by voting against the Second Reading of this Bill. But no, those hon. Members are too much afraid of the result of a General Election ever to put the Government into a minority. For instance, there is the hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison), who is now sitting opposite, and who was only returned by a casting vote. I believe honestly and conscientiously that we should have won the last election had it not been for the Land Purchase Bill of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. Hon. Gentlemen opposite used that Bill for their own purposes. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian said that he did not intend to re-introduce the Bill, but hon. Gentlemen opposite mistrusted him. If ever a Parliament was bound by a direct mandate from the people it is this Parliament, the mandate being not to use the Imperial credit for Land Purchase in Ireland. If hon. Gentlemen opposite have changed their minds, as they have a right to do, the honourable course is to dissolve the present Parliament, and ask the electors to absolve them from the veto which they imposed upon them. In such a case they might, with some show of honesty and fairness, come forward with a proposal of this kind. But we know that they were against the Land Purchase system at the last election, and I have seen no sort of proof that they have changed their minds. The arguments of the Government are nothing but pleas in mitigation of their inconsistency. They say, in the first place, that the Bill is a small one, and secondly, that the risk is merely a nominal one. Now, the Bill is not small. If we grant these £33,000,000 we must inevitably become the owners of the whole of Ireland. I can understand hon. Members opposite being in favour of that, but I cannot understand how any human being can deny that this is the necessary consequence of the present Bill. I hope every elector will remember that this will amount to 3d. on the Income Tax from every person who pays it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham admitted that every supporter of the Government was pledged against giving any guarantee, but, he said, the risk is nominal. But there is no such thing as a nominal risk when you have put your name to a bill, provided you are solvent. I appeal to every solvent Member of this House—an hon. Friend says the minority—whether he has ever been asked by a friend to put his name to a bill with the assurance that it was merely a nominal proceeding and has not had to pay for doing it? I know that has invariably happened in my own case. Let us look at this as a business transaction. We buy this land, and upon what terms? We must remember that half of the land of Ireland has not been subjected to reductions of rent in the Land Court. Reductions have been made amounting to 20 per cent., but, as to all that land which has not been dealt with in the Land Court, we should have to buy on the actual rents without reduction. It must also be remembered that the Chief Secretary stated that he would only take off 5 per cent—it appeared from a subsequent statement that it ought to be 3½ per cent., but I take it at 5 per cent. — for the cost of management. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian estimated, in 1886, that for bad debts and management, there should be allowed a difference of 10 per cent. between net and gross; the total, therefore, to be deducted, between the value put on the estate of which purchase is to be made, and the real value, would be 35 per cent. in regard to every estate not brought into the Land Court. The Chief Secretary supposed a case of a farm bought at a rental of £105; he takes off £5, and the price would be £1,700, or 17 years' purchase, the amount of the rent less the landlord's rates. Now, what is the real case? If you take off 35 per cent. you find the real value of the farm, £1,005, and the real and *bonâ fide* rental £65 a year. But you have to do more, because the right hon. Gentleman proposes to add two years' arrears. We, therefore, should be paying £1,900 for a farm, the value of which we ascertain to be £1,005. But when I say a value of £1,005 I should like to know who would give half that amount? What an advertisement it would make—"To be sold, an eligible property in Kerry; the rent is now £107, but deducting the amount which will probably be taken off by the Land Court, £65; the tenant has not paid any rent for the last two years." The hon. Gentleman who has just spoken told us of himself and his constituents going to Ireland to take farms, but he and his friends must be more foolish than I take them to be if they take farms under such conditions. Can anything be more monstrous in these monstrous proposals than the suggestion that we pay not only for the estates but for arrears? Irish landlords, as well as English landlords and English traders, make bad debts, but here is a proposal t pay an excessive price, and also to pay in full for the bad debts incurred. I confess I see nothing so admirable in the Irish landlords to induce me to make any such sacrifice. Through generations they have practised heartless exactions upon the Irish tenantry. Swift has described how the very vitality of the tenants was sacrificed to Irish landlords. Lord Clare, in 1787, showed how they exacted excessive rents, and what do hon. Gentleman opposite say to the opinion of an authority they will not question—their Bible—the *Times*, which, in 1852, declared "the name of Irish landlord stinks in the nostrils of Christendom." Yet these are the men on whose account we are called upon to incur this enormous liability. We are to buy for cash, at excessive prices, and how do we sell? We sell upon credit; that is the first thing objectionable. We take an estate worth £1,005 at £1,900, and then we sell it again for an annuity over 45 years. Everybody knows that the price of land may fall. We are told this will not happen; but who, before the last 10 years, would have predicted the fall there actually has been, and who shall say there may not be another heavy fall in the next 10 years? There may be bad years, and what is to be done then? But even if there are not, individual farmers may have bad years; they may be extravagant and they may have to be evicted, some of them. Does anybody think that it will increase the love for the British connection if evictions are carried out in the name of the State instead of the landlord? When 180,000 tenants have to pay the rents in the form of taxes to an alien Government, will there not be a very considerable temptation not to pay? We shall have to become the owners of the whole of Ireland, and if there should be a general strike against the payment of rents, how are we to enforce payment? What shall we do with the land if we evict? Where are you to find the men to take the land? Where will you find labourers to cultivate it, with the whole country under a strike against rent? Why, the English Government would become nothing more than a huge Smith-Barry concern. It is a most remarkable thing that this transaction is to take place with men who hon. and right hon. Gentlemen have told us, again and again, are not fit for self-government, not to be trusted to legislate for themselves or for landlords. But why this political incredulity on the one hand, and this financial credulity on the other? The Government know that the land is no security, and, therefore, they have inserted these contingent securities. Now the right hon. Member for Derby has treated these in so drastic a fashion that there is absolutely nothing left of them; as an existing entity they have disappeared. If Ireland is to be deemed an integral part of the British Empire, why, if the Kerry farmer fails to pay, should the responsibility fall upon the Ulster farmer and the Dublin shopkeeper, any more than upon the farmer in Kent and shopkeeper in London? The multiplication of securities is like trying to give additional value to a bill by having it signed six times by the same person; and in this case it is the forgery of the same name six times over. These contingent securities are illusory and unjust, and they are merely put in to hoodwink the British public, and make them believe that the risk is merely nominal. Certainly the securities are of no value, because they are not pledged with the consent of the Irish people. There is no such thing as taxation, whether Local or Imperial, without the consent of those who are to be taxed. I have seen it discussed who is the real author of this Bill, whether it is the Chief Secretary or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I never entertained the slightest doubt about it after I heard the speech of the Chief Secretary. There is a sort of Egyptian Loan Prospectus flavour about these contingent securities, in which I recognise the "fine Roman hand" of the ex-partner in the firm of Frühling and Goschen. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is an excellent financier, and he knows well enough that not by the addition of any number of rotten eggs can you make a good omelette, and that it is no use multiplying rotten securities to make a sound security. But, instead of coming here to try and hoodwink poor innocent people like us, let him go with his proposals to that eminent firm I have mentioned. Let him ask Messrs. Frühling and Goschen if they will guarantee this loan without English credit, and I know Messrs Frühling and Goschen would reply, "Go to——the House of Commons; do not come here with such a proposal." With regard to the congested districts, the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon) has made some cogent remarks, but I confess that, even for the congested districts, I am not disposed to use Imperial credit unnecessarily, and certainly not in the mode proposed by the Bill. These districts are absolutely valueless from an agricultural point of view, though persons live there because it is traditional to live there, and it appears that Irishmen have a partiality for living where their forefathers lived before, and yet we are to buy their lands at residential value, and sell them at the supposed agricultural value, taking the difference out of a fund that belongs as much to the English as to the Irish nation. Then, I want to know what you will do in regard to tenant right? We are to pull down the houses; how are we to pay the people? This does not come out of the Church Fund; this cost the taxpayers will be required to pay. Everybody knows we have unsanitary rookeries in London. We condemn them, but we do not buy them up at habitable house price, pull down the rookeries, and erect new buildings, and take the difference out of the Public Exchequer. Yet that is what we are called upon to do for these unsanitary rookeries in Ireland. This is not the way I should deal with Irish landed property of this sort. The question has been much discussed as to whom this Bill will really benefit. At first sight it seems as if the tenant would benefit, but though the immediate result will be to lower his rent, yet he will be bound hand and foot in the grasp of a machine, and will have to pay this rent, or instalments, in bad times as well as in good. It would be far better for him to bide his time until the Liberals come into office and bring in legislation which will be still more favourable to him. The real gainers will be the larger landlords and the English mortgagees. The extent to which the large landlords have availed themselves of the Ashbourne Acts is an indication of this. Members of the House of Lords have received between them £930,000 and the City Companies £450,000 under those Acts. Large landlords have to recognise the principle that property has its obligations as well as its rights, and their income is reduced by the contributions which decency compels them to make to local and charitable funds. It, therefore, pays them very well to sell their property and get rid of these calls upon them. The small landlords, however, are generally mortgaged to the full extent of their property, and are merely squatters on a field or two surrounding their house, and which they term their demesne. They are not turned off, because it is nobody's business to turn them off, and so they go on from year to year. For Irish landlords a sale would be ruinous, but if this Bill is passed their mortgagees will compel them to sell. The London Insurance Companies have advanced an immense amount of money on Irish land at 5 per cent., and they have hitherto not pressed for foreclosure, as the estates would not realise the full amount of money advanced upon them, and they do not like it to appear to their shareholders, from the balance-sheet, that they have had to write off a certain portion of their assets as bad debts. This Bill will enable these English Insurance Companies to realise the money they have advanced at the high rate of 5 per cent. interest. The attitude which we take up on this subject is that there can be no property in extortionate rents; that either the rents are fair, in which case there is no necessity to reduce the rents, or they are excessive, in which case there is no necessity to compensate the landlords. But then it will be said the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has prejudiced the question of establishing the principle of dual ownership, and single ownership is better. This is nonsense, and the very worst of nonsense —sentimental nonsense. Irishmen have gained considerably by dual ownership, fixity of tenure, compensation for improvements; and they pay rents which theoretically are fair rents. Irish farmers are much better off than English farmers, and why should the latter pledge their credit to assist the Irish farmers to whole ownership, while English farmers have not even the advantages of half ownership which the Irish farmers enjoy? Why should Imperial credit be brought in to enable tenants to buy their holdings? There are many hon. Members who are in favour of leasehold enfranchisement, but no one proposes to carry it out by providing funds by means of Imperial credit. The land question would solve itself if the principle of "live and thrive"—that rent should only be the surplus left after the tenant lived and throve—were thoroughly carried out. I would warn my hon. Friends from Ireland against accepting this scheme or suggesting any other which would involve Imperial credit. The Government realise that the people are coming more and more to understand Home Rule, and their object in forcing this Bill on Ireland is to strengthen their arguments against Home Rule by being able to appeal to the English people not to give up the government of a country of which they are practically the mortgagees. I appeal to my hon. Friends from Ireland not to renounce their birthright for a mess of pottage, especially as the mess of pottage will go not to the tenants but to the landlords. Irish Members ought to mistrust anything offered to them by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham or the Government; they ought to say to the Government, "We claim the right to govern ourselves, but we do not want your money." If they are offered any species of Local Government it might be wise to accept it, but I hope, in taking it, they will be frank and candid, that they take it not as a final settlement, but to use as a means for obtaining Home Rule. It may be a useful means of securing that end, the County Councils constituting so many branches of the National League with a recognised official position. If Irishmen adopt this attitude Home Rule is absolutely certain. The English Liberal Party has declared itself in favour of it, and I ask hon. Gentlemen opposite to show any one single reform for which that Party ever declared itself that in the end has not been carried? If we on this side of the House intend to stand by the Irish, I submit that the Irish have no right and no claim to ask us to incur a species of liability direct or indirect in respect of the relationships between landlord and tenant in Ireland. The scheme of the Bill is bad; it is a thoroughly treacherous Bill; it puts forward sham contingent securities, and it pretends that it only involves the expenditure of a sum of £33,000,000, whereas a sum of £165,000,000 is involved. But even if it were the best scheme that could be devised by the wit of man, if it were a final settlement of the Irish question, I should, even if I stood alone in doing so, oppose it, because I object to the use of Imperial credit for such a purpose.

*(4.3.) SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, N.W.): I shall not endeavour to treat the question, which is a most important one, in the same way as has the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. He has treated it as if he believes that the first and only object which the Government of the country has is to keep itself in power by any means. I venture to say that the one object the Government have in view in dealing with the matter is, if possible, to settle this most difficult and dangerous question of Land Purchase, as it now exists in Ireland. The difficulties which exist have been augmented and intensified by the very hon. Gentleman with whom the hon. Gentleman acts, and by what they have done from the time of the Act of 1870, and especially since the Act of 1881. I myself opposed that Act at every stage. I opposed it because I saw in it no final settlement whatever, and because I believed that under it the landlords would suffer far more than they deserved to suffer. Will hon. Gentlemen opposite deny that it was the opinion of the Government at that time that the Act of 1881 would be a security to the landlord, and that the rent that was left to them when the dual ownership was in full play would be absolutely secured to them? Has that been the case? Was not the land worth something like 27 years' purchase at that time? What is it worth now? I will ask the hon. Gentleman in all sincerity how he would like, in any enterprise with which he is connected, to have a dual ownership forced upon him in that enterprise. How would he like to have his profits pulled down by others, whose sole endeavour would be to make him pay as much as possible to their account? I will answer that question for the hon. Gentleman, because I know there is no man in the House who would be less liberal to those with whom he has to deal than the hon. Gentleman. When I heard the hon. Gentleman refer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I thought the hon. Gentleman must have known in his long public life that when a statement has been publicly refuted and done with it is usual not to refer to it, and I think the course taken by the hon. Gentleman was neither generous nor just. The hon. Gentleman talked about the landlord selling off a portion of his property. I will put it to any hon. Member sitting below the Gangway, if he were in the position of many of the landlords with large mortgages upon their properties, whether he would not like to sell off a certain portion of it in order to clear off some of the encumbrances, and thus enable him to live in respectable circumstances and with the honest wish to do his duty to those living under him on that property which he had inherited and which had been owned by his family for generations—yes, and more than generations—for hundreds of years many of these estates have been in the possession of one family. The great object of the landlords is to get their property cleared and be able to live upon it. The question raised by the hon. Member for Mayo was one which must touch the heart of any one who knows the localities and districts referred to. I have known these districts for many years—perhaps even better than many hon. Members opposite.

I saw them under the worst circumstances which it was possible to conceive—namely, in the days of the first famine—when I was on duty there, and I said that any man's heart must be made of stone if it did not bleed at what was to be seen at the time, in the district. I appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite. Has anything ever been done from that day down to the present time in the interests of those districts? Both Governments have alike neglected that which they ought to have done, and have never taken account of these districts which have made all the disturbances in Ireland. Whenever there is anything wrong in those districts where men are generally nearly at the verge of starvation—when anything of that kind does occur, agitation always springs up and is taken advantage of for the worst purposes. In 1846-7-8 the disturbances were very great; but the district itself was in an awful condition, and no one will deny that the English people, with great generosity, sent over large sums of money to assist the people. As to the present Bill, I am not in love with it, but the one part I like is that part which deals with the congested districts, and it is on that account I give my support to the Second Reading of the Bill. I hope the Bill will be much amended in Committee. I want to see it made a Bill which shall, if possible, be a final measure; and if it is not to be a final measure, then I am quite sure it will be a mischievous one. If it does not settle the question I know we shall have more agitation, and perhaps worse agitation than we have had before. I think my right hon. Friend also in charge of the Bill knows that as well as I do; and I must say that knowing and feeling that, and knowing my right hon. Friend's anxiety to make Ireland prosperous, contented, and happy, though some may deny it, I hope my right hon. Friend will accept and put into the Bill such amendment as he may think will be found effective to make it, at any rate, a permanent measure so far as human forethought can secure that end. I admit the question is a very difficult one, and I am very much struck with the remarks made by the hon. Member for Mayo. But I certainly did not think he was just in his remarks with regard to the landowners occupying in that part. I have in my hand a Return of an estate in Mayo; and on that estate, ever since 1884, by the action of the Land League, not one single farthing of rent has been paid to the landlord up to 1887. The hon. Member for Mayo and his friends cheer that statement. But this is a good landlord, and one who is anxious to do his duty. Out of 190 tenants no less than 186 were under £4 valuation. What has happened? Not one single farthing of rent has been paid during the time I have mentioned, but the landlord has had to pay all the poor rates, which amounted to a very large sum the half of the poor rate was only paid by the poor tenants. The House will no doubt be astounded to hear that the poor rates amounted to over 10s. in the £1, and not one farthing of rent paid. Let hon. Members look at the matter in any sense they like, and say whether they call that justice as between man and man. Looking at the whole case, and at the way in which the poor rates are paid by many landlords, and how property has been transferred to the tenants, it seems only fair that the poor rate should be transferred to the tenants, and a proper deduction from the judicial rents. That would be a step in the right direction, and it would quiet a great number of people and give a good effect to the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. I recollect the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford, when the last Act was being passed, stating what a good thing it would be if the tenant could only have the land which he tilled. He gave an instance of how he had been to Ireland, and had seen where that was done cottages and land had improved, and the people were happy and contented in every case. And now the right hon. Gentleman is going to vote against the Bill which is to settle the whole question, and give the tenants more power to get the land than they have had in any previous Bill. Looking at the way in which hon. Gentlemen opposite once dealt with the question, I do not think there ought to be any difficulty made about British credit. I know perfectly well it is a difficult question, and an unpopular question; but, at the same time, when any improvement is to take place in Ireland—when Ireland is to continue to belong to England, as we are all determined it shall—when we intend that the Union shall be kept, we ought to be prepared to make some sacrifice to enable Ireland to place herself in a position in which she will be peaceable, contented, and happy. As to the proposals made by the hon. Member for Cork, I thought at first the hon. Gentleman was going to be liberal to the Irish landowners, who are run down by everyone unfairly and unjustly. There are many in Ireland who do their duty as well as those who live in this country, and those who do so ought to be maintained in that position in Ireland which they previously held. I believe many of these are a great benefit and a blessing to the county. It is quite evident to any one who has heard the debate that the hon. Member for Cork consulted neither his Colleagues nor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian with regard to his proposals. He evidently thinks that with his 85 followers he is master of the position, and that he can dictate terms, and accordingly he expresses himself in the way he has done. I certainly tried to master the views enumerated by the hon. Gentleman, and I was in hopes that the landowners were to have some small modicum of money to pay off their mortgages. I hoped that the hon. Gentleman wanted these mortgages to disappear, and that the landlord would then be able to claim what little would be left of his own property. But I was disappointed to hear that the hon. Gentleman proposed a rent reduction of 30 per cent. with a certain modicum to be paid to the landlord. I had hoped that the hon. Gentleman was really anxious to establish the landlord firm in his saddle in Ireland. But that is contrary to anything he has ever said before; indeed, he and his Colleagues have wished to get rid of the landlords. Then I had to look to the other alternative, which was, first, reducing the landlords' rent by 30 per cent. after the judicial rent had been fixed, and after the reduction made by the Act of 1887; and then, after things had gone on pleasantly for a year or two, there is the unpleasant alternative shadowed forth by the hon. Members for Mayo and the Scotland Division of Liverpool of a repudiation of the obligations of the people. So that when another difficulty occurs the people will again say to the landlord, "Down with another 30 per cent!" until they got the unfortunate landlord into a corner, and prairie value will be all he will get for his land. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian thought something of that kind might occur, and that was why he was anxious to pass his Land Bill of 1886. In these circumstances, I think, the Chief Secretary, being forewarned, ought to be forearmed, and that we should not have added to his Bill the scheme of the Member for Cork, which is open to the objection which I have stated, and which I think would prove prove a cruel one for the landlords. As to the scheme of local self-government referred to by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, that requires most careful consideration, and I will only say that if that scheme is passed at the present moment—if all the resources of Ireland are placed in the hands of the County Councils of Ireland—hon. Gentlemen opposite, with perhaps the best intentions, will be able to manipulate the County Councils, and things will work into their hands certainly very much against the interests of the landowners, and even perhaps for some of the tenants, for whom they profess to act. I hope nothing will be done in that matter without due consideration; but I am sure the Chief Secretary has done his duty in all matters pertaining to Ireland to the best of his ability. We have never had a Secretary for Ireland who has more earnestly carried out his difficult and dangerous task, and I hope the House will now concur with him and assist him in taking care that the present measure which he has introduced shall be so amended and carried that it will be of use and benefit to Ireland for many generations, and that it will do a great deal in the immediate future towards making that country contented, prosperous, and happy. I believe that when the tenants are in such a frame of mind their great desire is to be let alone in the position in which God has placed them. I shall, on these grounds, support this Bill.

*(4.26.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): The hon. Member who has just sat down seemed to regard most philosophically the idea that the British taxpayer will become the owner of the land in Ireland, and I should

have thought that the illustration he himself cited of a landlord having to pay the poor rate of 10s. in the £1 and getting no rent for years would have been a warning to him not to be too eager to embark in such a speculation. What excellent security would the estate in question afford! What an admirable property for the British taxpayer to lend his money on! After the remarkable speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham last night, we are in somewhat of a difficulty in discussing this measure. I think, however, from the reception given by the Chief Secretary to the criticisms of that speech by the Member for Dover, that I am entitled now to proceed on the assumption that the suggestions of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham will not be accepted by the Government, and therefore I contend that this measure will take Irish security without the consent of the Irish people, that it will be partial in its operation, will settle nothing, and increase the difficulties of the situation. My great objection to the Bill is that you will commit a gross injustice by taking Irish securities without consulting the Irish people, and against their expressed wishes. You are going to take from them for a period of five years a sum of £40,000 annually, which you have admitted the Irish people are justly entitled to. Hon. Members opposite are very fond of telling us that one of the great causes of difficulty in Ireland is the poverty of the people. Yet you are taking from them for five years £40,000 to which they are entitled. That is the generosity of the English Government. Then you are going to lock up, if necessary, year by year £200,000, in addition to which they are also justly entitled. You have no right to take this money against their wishes, not for the benefit of the many, but the few. As regards contingent securities, you talk about your responsibilities in Ireland. One of your great objections to Home Rule is that you cannot relieve yourselves of the responsibility of governing in Ireland. How are you going, by these contingent securities, to accept that responsibility? Either these contingent securities are necessary or they are not. If they are not, you have no business to put them into the Bill. If they are, then you must admit that there is a possibility of their being used; and if they are used you incur the responsibility of leaving Irish children uneducated and Irish lunatics and paupers without support. There are two absolutely necessary conditions to any scheme of purchase. One is that it must be complete, and the second that it must be equitable. Both are wanting in the present scheme. Personally, I doubt whether it is a very wise course, after having found that one body of landlords has done great injury to the country, to create another body of landlords as a remedy for the evil. However, that is a minor point, and one which may be practically met by very large controlling powers over those landlords who are to be created. But as regards the completeness of the Government's scheme, I say it cannot be complete. We are entitled to know from the Government whether they intend this scheme to be a final one, or whether they intend to act on the same lines until they have bought out all the landlords in Ireland. I press that point. About the circulating fund, I want to dispose of that—to get it out of the way. We are told that, when the £33,000,000 is spent, there will be still money available for the purchase of land, because the repayments will be available for fresh purchases. Hon. Members forget that the repayment takes place to a very small amount every year at compound interest, and that it is in the last few years that the real repayments take place. Imagine the impossibly favourable circumstance of the £33,000,000 being expended this year! What would be the position as regards repayment in 1900? A small fraction over £3,000,000 would have been repaid, with the result that you would have killed, or put into a state of somnolence for a very long period, the goose that laid the golden egg. This circulating fund is worth nothing for practical purposes; therefore, all you have at the present moment is £33,000,000 provided by this Bill. I think it is admitted that any partial scheme of purchase in Ireland will lead to great discontent and great difficulty. I have here some very weighty remarks made by a right hon. Gentleman in whom the Government have very great confidence. In fact, they credit him with a depth of sagacity as regards Ireland that they would hardly attribute to any other Member of the Government. I mean the right hon. Gentleman who, in a 24 hours' visit to Ireland at the beginning of 1886, was able to alter the whole policy of Her Majesty's Government towards Ireland. I refer to the right hon. Gentleman the leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith). Now, on April 16th, 1886, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian offered to provide £50,000,000 to buy out the Irish landlords, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) spoke as follows :—

> "By what means is the Chancellor of the Exchequer to distinguish one application from another. The purchase must be complete or it cannot be carried out at all. If you leave portions of Ireland undealt with by the Bill you will leave an interest which will be an object of attack, for everyone knows that if there is anything unpopular in Ireland with the distressed classes it is that which is prosperous and successful. I doubt very much the wisdom of introducing this apple of discord."

If you were going to introduce an apple of discord by proposing to give £50,000,000 for land purchase in 1886, I should like some explanation as to how the smaller sum of £33,000,000 to be given in 1890 is going to escape the description of being an "Apple of discord." We are entitled to know why the Government have changed their minds upon this point. If I am told that they have not changed their minds, and that they intend to go on until they have completed land purchase, we are entitled to ask how they intend to go on. The Chief Secretary said the Bill will put no burden on the British taxpayer, because he has got, in the securities which are to be taken under the powers of the Bill, the exact amount which will guarantee the repayment of the £33,000,000. But that amount will not settle the question of land purchase. What are you going to do after it is spent? Where are you going to get the rest of the money? There is no Irish security left for it; you must go to the British taxpayer. If that is your position, I think it is your bounden duty to say so now, and not to leave the difficulty to some future Government. The right hon. Gentleman knows that there is great difficulty in this matter, that it will lead to a reduction of rent, and that it will be the cause of agitation. That is clear from his own observations in introducing the Bill. He said that so large a reduction as from £107 to £68 may, and will, produce considerable difficulty on adjoining estates where purchase may have taken place. Therefore, he proposes that for the space of five years the reduction shall not be quite so large. What is to happen when those five years are over? We will have a state of things which will produce considerable difficulty on adjoining estates. Therefore, by his own confession the right hon. Gentleman is only legislating for a period of five years, and after that five years there will be, according to his own showing, difficulty and danger on the adjoining estates. Now, Sir, the Chancellor of the Exchequer alluded to the Bill of 1886, and told us we ought to be grateful to the Unionist Party for having saved the tenants of Ireland from having a great burden thrown on their shoulders. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1886 made a distinction between the gross and net rent, and the landlord was only to receive 20 years' purchase on the net rent, and the result of that would have been that whereas the tenant would have paid £80 a year, the Irish State would only have had to pay to the British State £60 or £64 a year on the loan, and the difference between these two sums would have gone to the direct benefit of the Irish taxpayer, and it would have formed an absolute security to the British taxpayer. Before the British taxpayer could lose a single farthing the Irish State would have been able to give the Irish tenant a reduction varying from 36 to 40 per cent., and still have been able to pay the whole of its debt to the British State. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to have forgotten the further protection afforded by Clause 15 of the right hon. Gentleman's (Mr. Gladstone's) Bill. That clause directed the Land Commissioners to take into account the circumstances of every holding, and not to advance 20 years' purchase unless they thought there was security. Before that Act came into operation, the Land Commissioners would have realised the fall in prices which has prevented them giving 20 years' purchase under the Ashbourne Act. We are told that the terms of purchase are comparatively unimportant, because the whole thing is based on freedom of contract. We have heard of freedom of contract until we are sick. Why, if freedom of contract existed in Ireland the Act of 1881 was of gross robbery and injustice. An hon. Gentleman opposite says that that was an act of gross robbery. If that is so, in the name of common sense and honesty why did he support the present Government in extending the principle of that Act; because he supported the extension of the Act of 1881? Talk about freedom of contract! Not only did freedom of contract not exist in the past, but even at present it does not exist in regard to land purchase in Ireland. I have here the Official Returns to November 30, 1889. They refer only to the Land Purchase Department up to that date. There were 2,188 cases in which the Commissioners refused to sanction the terms which the landlord and tenant had come to. We do not know their reasons in all these cases; but we do know their reasons in 743 cases, because in those cases the tenants had agreed voluntarily by freedom of contract to pay to the landlords £362,790, and the Land Commissioners refused to sanction the terms thus voluntarily arrived at; but they subsequently sanctioned them on an alteration of the terms from £362,000 to £302,000. These were all cases of small tenancies, taking the average. In those 743 cases, by some means or another, the landlords had been able to compel the tenants to agree to pay £60,000 more for the farms than they were worth—ah! but it means more than that, for the present Attorney General for Ireland, in his wish to prove the largeness of the security, said—

> "Everybody knows in Ireland that in a large number of cases the interest of the tenant exceeded the interest of the landlord."

For my part, I am satisfied if the House will accept the proposition that in all cases of dual ownership the tenant has a real property of some value. As it is, when the Land Commissioners send their valuers, they value the whole property as they find it, including the tenant's improvements, as well as the landlord's interest; therefore, in these 743 cases the tenants have been compelled voluntarily to agree to pay for the landlords' property £60,000 more than the landlords and tenant's property combined is worth. Is not that evidence of compulsion? If it is not I do not know what would be. If these men do not pay, or cannot pay, do you not think the feeling of the rest of the Irish people would be with them? Yet, if they do not pay, what is the next thing? Their interest has to be sold. The Report of the Irish Land Commission for the year ending August, 1887, refers to the cases of tenants who purchased under the Church Act, and who had a sense of wrong upon their minds, and whom their neighbours believed to have been unfairly treated. This is what they say—

> "There has been some increase also in arrears due by tenant purchasers, and here we think it our duty to bring under the notice of your Excellency the very significant fact that in cases where we have been obliged to take legal proceedings against such purchasers we have been able, in hardly a single instance, to effect a sale of a purchaser's interest against his will. As one example of the difficulties we have to contend with, we mention the following case in the County of Louth. A purchaser and mortgagor who owed 12 half-yearly instalments was evicted from his farm after all attempts at compromise had failed. The farm was then set up for sale by us, and we were obliged to buy it in, as the sale was boycotted. The farm still remains on our hands, though it is a very desirable piece of land, close to the town of Ardee, and in addition to heavy costs and expenses which we have already incurred we have now to pay a caretaker to take charge of the property. The certainty that we have felt that a similar result would follow whenever we endeavoured to effect a sale of lands of which we had dispossessed the purchaser for non-payment of his liabilities has seriously embarrassed us."

So that not only had the British taxpayer to lose his money advanced for buying the property, but he had to pay a caretaker to look after the property. I think I have shown that, under the existing system, there are cases in which pressure is brought to bear on the tenants to induce them to make unfair bargains in the purchase of their improvements. When the Ashbourne Act was being extended two years ago I tried to get the Chief Secretary to accept an Amendment which would prevent the tenant having to buy his own improvements. I was then told that it was impossible that such an Amendment could be worked; but now the right hon. Gentleman has put a clause in this Bill which shows that in certain cases what I proposed can be done. He will deal with cases in which there is an agreement between landlord and tenant that the Land Commissioners shall fix the price, but he will not meet the cases in which no agreement is come to, nor where under unjust pressure the tenant is induced to make an unfair bargain. What is the state of things now? There are at the present moment in Ireland about 18,000 persons who were formerly tenants, but are so no longer, and are merely caretakers. Does the House realise the position of these men, who cannot legally get back the possession of their farms except they can agree with their landlords? Are they in a position to make a free bargain? Will not the temptation to make an unjust bargain be too great for them? You say we cannot blow hot and cold at the same time by saying the terms are too favourable to the landlord and too unfavourable to the tenant; but I say that that is not the case. There are substantial tenants in Ireland who can well take care of themselves; but there are numerous small tenants who are not in that position, but who are encumbered by unjust arrears and who are not able to take care of themselves in the same way. When you say that those tenants who are more favourably circumstanced than others would not join in repudiation, I ask are you sure of that? Have you read the history of Tipperary, where men have gone out and left property amounting to thousands of pounds rather than pay a comparatively small sum to the Member for South Hunts which would help him in his warfare against their fellow tenants in Cork. I may add that I served on the Commission for the relief of distress in the congested districts of Ireland. I listened with great interest to the remarks of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) on the subject of the congested districts. The hon. Member speaks on this subject with an authority and knowledge that I cannot pretend to, and he has the confidence of the poor people of the congested districts, which the Government lack. In these districts there is an amount of distrust and suspicion of the Government that is not equalled in any other part of Ireland owing to past misgovernment. Right hon. Gentlemen claim our consideration for this portion of the Bill, but what is it going to do for the congested districts? They could not do anything without funds, and the Bill did not profess to find funds for carrying out public works or improvements in these districts except some merely nominal in amount. The money provided by the Chief Secretary was not for the purpose of improving the districts, but for the purpose of protecting the British taxpayer, and that money is to be provided from a purely Irish source. If you desire to do anything to promote the industrial prosperity of these districts you must devote your attention mainly to the fishing industry, and you cannot develop the fishing on the West Coast unless you build several good and safe harbours, and you have no funds provided in the Bill for that purpose. The people also require boats of considerable size but there are no funds provided for that purpose. I have heard it said that the people on the West Coast are not capable of using large boats, but that is not true. Before the famine they had large boats. The people of the Island of Arran had several large boats which they used with skill; but during the years of terrible trial and distress, these boats were lost. If they could be restored, there is no doubt that the fishing industry could again be prosecuted successfully. As to migration, hon. Gentlemen opposite scoff and sneer at the idea; but do they realise the peculiar condition of many parts of Mayo? I know a district 8 or 10 miles from the town of Westport, where the people are living on patches of reclaimed bog, and where, a few years ago, we had to start public works in order to save the population from starvation. Well, in spite of the miserable condition of these people, there was, close at hand, a large tract of land of infinitely better quality than that they endeavoured to exist upon which was going back to a state of nature and barrenness for want of tillage. Surely migration could be effected in this district to advantage; and there are other instances of a like nature I could mention if it were necessary. In conclusion, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland if he will deign to listen to a remark from one of the rank and file of the Irish Party; to answer me two questions at some later stage; first, what right he considers the Government have in a matter affecting Ireland alone to take Irish taxation for a benefit of a section of the people against the declared wish of the vast majority of the taxpayers of Ireland; and, secondly, is this intended to be the final settlement of the land question in Ireland? Is this Bill the beginning and the end, or is there another Bill behind it? If it is not a final settlement, then, having taken by force all the Irish securities to provide for this Bill, how is he going to find the money for the final settlement without coming to the British taxpayer? I ask him as a matter of honour and consistency to make that clear and unmistakeable to the House, and to say whether it is intended at some future time to come directly to the British taxpayer for further powers, and not to try and shelter himself behind the sham argument that this Bill does not really rest on British security.

*(5.9.) The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, Dublin University): I shall only ask the House to give me its indulgence for a short time whilst I endeavour to explain, in a very general way, the reason why I intend to give my hearty support to this measure; and in doing so I shall ask the leave of the House to speak, not so much as a Member of the Government to which I have the honour to belong, but rather as an Irishman anxious for the welfare of my countrymen, and as a Representative of a section of the community, especially in the South-West of Ireland, who have not much representation otherwise in this House. I could not expect the House to listen to me were I to pretend to examine all the objections which have been raised to this measure; but I desire to call attention to the extraordinary fact that hardly any two hon. Members on the opposite side of the House have based their opposition to the Bill upon the same ground. The right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir G. Trevelyan), who spoke first on behalf of the English Opposition, said that he should be in favour of any measure that would enable substantial tenants to purchase their holdings, while the hon. Member for Cork, who spoke first on behalf of the Irish Opposition, asserted that such tenants are well able to take care of themselves, and that he would give such facilities only to the smaller occupiers. Other hon. Members declare that the tenants will not avail themselves of the unattractive terms offered by the Bill, while others, again, assert that there will be a rush to participate in those advantages, which will be followed by general repudiation on the part of the tenants. Then it is also said that only good landlords will sell their estates under the provisions of the Bill, while, on the other hand, it is complained that the good landlords will have no chance of selling under the Government proposal. It is further alleged that this Bill should be resisted because it is an insidious attempt to wean the Irish people from their adhesion to Home Rule; while, on the other hand, it is with equal confidence boasted that the more independent you make the tenant as a peasant proprietor, the more admirable a Nationalist he becomes. Then it is said that £33,000,000 is too much to provide; while, on the other hand, it is insisted that that sum is not half enough. These objections, therefore, are inconsistent and mutually destructive of each other. Yet all these objectors are, or have been, ardent advocates of some scheme of land purchase for Ireland. Again, the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), supported by "patriotic fibre"—as he described it—said we ought not, under any circumstances, to make any advance upon British credit for the creation of a peasant proprietor; and, finally, what struck me most of all was that the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down intimated to the House that he was disposed very much to doubt whether it would be a good thing to establish peasant proprietors in Ireland, because that would be establishing a new class of Irish landlords. Well, I am under the impression that the hon. Member himself is either a purchaser or a seller under the Ashbourne Act.

*Mr. MAHONY: I purchased a small farm from my brother, who had sold his property to the rest of the tenants in a certain district, and as I happened to hold a farm I also purchased.

*Mr. PLUNKET: The hon. Member must not imagine I am charging him with any offence; but it struck me as a strange thing that this throwing doubt on the general policy of the Act should come almost alone from the hon. Gentleman who has himself availed of the provisions of a similar measure.

*Mr. MAHONY: Under the original Act before coercion.

*Mr. PLUNKET: There have besides been two or three suggestions of alternative schemes; but it occurrs to me, as I believe it will to many outside the House, that opposition of this kind is not of a very formidable character. There is confusion in the camp and conflict within the ranks of our assailants, and if those who have put forward these various objections and different schemes should succeed in all getting together in one Lobby, they will form for the moment a congeries of atoms; but it does not follow that their attitude and conduct will amount to a solid, consistent, or strong opposition to the measure which is now before the House. For myself, I support this Bill because I believe, in the first place, that it will be of great advantage to all classes of the Irish people. It will be so, because, as far as it goes, it will mark great progress in the direction of getting rid of the conflict between landlords and tenants, which has ever been such a hindrance to the prosperity of the one great industry of Ireland. It will release the country from the trouble and shame that have been brought upon it for a long time, and recently in an acute form, by the conflicts between landlords and tenants. That has always been, as all who have spoken or written on the history of Ireland agree, the one great source of difficulty and danger in Ireland. But if that source of difficulty and danger was great in former times, how much greater has it become since the passing of the Land Act of 1881. Whatever the merits or demerits of that Act may be, which is a question I will not enter into at this moment, the Act of 1881 created dual ownership in two persons who must have opposite interests and objects. The situation was summed up in a single phrase by Lord Dufferin, when he said that the Land Act of 1881 was an attempt to put two men into one bed under one blanket; one man was sure to kick away at the other until he has succeeded in kicking him on to the floor, and thus securing the whole bed and blanket to himself. A broader ground on which I myself would advocate the adoption of the Bill, even if much greater risk and difficulty were involved in it, is that it will help to modify the political deadlock in which we are fixed from the present social condition of Ireland. I am not now going to argue fully a matter of such immediate controversy, as the effect which the creation of a large number of peasant proprietors is likely to have on the Home Rule movement. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) says that he is confident that the Bill will strengthen the Home Rule movement. But I remember that at the commencement of the Land League agitation those who invented it declared that they had found it necessary, in order to induce the Irish people to take an active and energetic part in it, to use the land question as a steam-engine in order to drag along the national question. It has occurred to me that if the land question were settled and the steam-engine were thus unhooked, the speed of the train might slacken, and before long it might come to a standstill. Setting that aside, however, I am convinced that so long as the minds of the Irish people are agitated in regard to a great predominant interest like the land question, it is impossible to carry on a system of self-government, at all events of representative government by political parties; for so long as this question is open it is in vain to appeal to the tenant-farmers upon any other subject of public importance whatever. The Irish people are consolidated by that question, and progress must be retarded for all other reforms until that controversy is eliminated from the discussion of public affairs. I advocate this measure also in the interests of the tenant. Whatever may be said by those who represent them in this House, I believe the tenantry of Ireland do take a most keen and deep interest in the success of some such scheme of Land Purchase. The zeal and energy with which tenants have thrown themselves into the experiments which have been already made is a sufficient confirmation of what I say.

The master passion of every Irish tenant is the absolute possession of the land on which he was born. All this was acknowledged by the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division when, speaking for the Government of 1884, he said—

> "The Government earnestly believed that the social and political state of Ireland was such that there never was a country in the world in which it was more important that those who tilled the land should also own it."

Great success has attended the measures that have been already passed with this purpose. In almost every instance in which tenants have been made owners there has been seen a most marked improvement in their condition. There have been signs of contentment and prosperity in their homes, and there has been peace in their localities. And now, Sir, let us look at it from the Irish landlords' point of view. Their position at the present time is one of extreme difficulty and danger. For many years abuse has been heaped upon them—mark you, not upon the bad ones only, but upon the Irish landlords as a class, and they have been singled out and marked down for destruction as a class for a well-defined political purpose. Of course I do not deny that there have been landlords whose conduct I should be the last to defend, but they have always formed a small minority among the landlords of Ireland, and here to-day I claim for that body, as a whole, that whenever their conduct has been brought under the review of any fair and impartial tribunal they have passed through the ordeal scatheless. We may be sure that we have heard the worst that can be said. Vigilant eyes are ever on the watch. Every error, great and small, has been paraded on the political stage and dragged under the limelight of public opinion. Their conduct during the famine time has been described as that of ogres and monsters. It has somehow or other been made a charge against the landlords that they were responsible for that awful calamity when for two years the food of the people rotted in the ground. I will not defend them in words of my own. Let me read to the House what was said of them in *New Ireland* by Mr. A. M. Sullivan, than whom no one was better able to speak on this subject with knowledge and authority—

> "The conduct of the Irish landlords throughout the famine period has been variously described and has been, I believe, generally condemned. I consider the censure visited on them too sweeping. I hold it to be in some respects cruelly unjust."

Then, after condemning many of the landlords individually, and especially the absentees, and referring to cases of heartless conduct on their part "here and there," he continues—

> "But granting all that has to be entered on the dark debtor side, the overwhelming balance is the other way. The bulk of the resident Irish landlords manfully did their best in that dread hour. No adequate tribute has ever been paid to the memory of those Irish landlords, and they were men of every party and creed, who perished martyrs to duty in that awful time; who did not fly the plague-reeking workhouse or fever-tainted court. Their names would make a goodly roll of honour. If they did too little compared with what the landlord class in England would have done in a similar case, it was because little was in their power. The famine found most of the resident landed gentry of Ireland on the brink of ruin. They were heritors of estates heavily overweighted with the debts of a bygone generation. Broad lands and lordly mansions were held by them on settlements and conditions that allowed small scope for the exercise of individual liberality. To these landlords the failure of one year's rental receipts meant mortgage, foreclosure, and hopeless ruin. Yet cases might be named by the score in which such men scorned to avert by pressure on their suffering tenantry the fate they saw impending over themselves. They 'went down with the ship.'"

This is the impartial summing up of a man who, if ever there was one, was the tenant's friend, and who, from personal experience, knew well the history of that time. For a while after the famine better and happier fortunes came upon Ireland, and prosperity seemed determined to return to the country. I remember that all classes were full of brighter hopes for the future. The relations of landlords and tenants greatly improved, and just before the year 1879 the number of evictions had fallen to something like one-fortieth what they had been in the famine time. I will not quote the Reports of Commissions, lest I should be told they were, more or less, landlords' Commissions; but I will quote the words of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who, in introducing the Land Bill of 1881, referred to the Report of the Bessborough Commission, which he said was, "certainly not deficient in popular sympathies." He also said:—

> "We do not think it just to propose legislation on this great matter on the ground, whether express or implied, of great misconduct on the part of the landlords of Ireland. On the contrary, as a rule, they have stood their trial, and they have been, as a rule, acquitted."

Again, in 1886, the right hon. Gentleman brought in his Land Purchase Bill, and said that he had to frame an indictment against the Irish landlords, but he added—

> "I frame that indictment against many in the past, but against few, I hope, in the present."

It was upon that judgment of the action of the Irish landlords of this generation that the right hon. Gentleman framed those two great proposals he made for the settlement of the Irish land question. But arguing this Session in the Debate on the Parnell Commission the right hon. Gentleman said the large reductions of rent had forced to his mind a different conviction and conclusion; and yet only the other day the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division said that the landlords in Ireland had no right to complain if they had had their rents cut down, because the reductions had been much larger in the case of the English landlords. We may be told that the English landlords made reductions voluntarily, whereas the Irish landlords were compelled by Act of Parliament to reduce their rents. What I have to say is, that from the time the Land League was instituted it was not possible for the Irish landlords to make reductions in a friendly spirit in any place where the Land League had the power to prevent them. The object of the Land Leaguers was not to make the landlord system tolerable, but to make it intolerable, in order that it might be abolished. Conciliation between landlord and tenant in Ireland was made impossible. The door was shut in the face of any attempt on the part of the landlord to come to terms with his tenants. I am sorry to detain the House so long upon this subject, but the Irish landlords have but few Representatives in this House, and as they have been so roughly used in recent times, it is not, I think, unfair that I should defend them. I am glad to say that in many parts of Ireland it was not in the power of agitators or anyone else to step in between landlord and tenant, and that in those parts of the country there have always been, and there still continue to be, happy and friendly relations between landlord and tenant. There is only one other accusation that is hurled at the heads of the Irish landlords that I want to refer to. The right hon. gentleman the Member for Derby, who has lately made himself a pastmaster in the art of denouncing the Irish landlords, says that now the English Garrison want to abandon their posts and carry off the plunder. Sir, there is no ground or foundation whatever for such an accusation, and I challenge the right hon. Gentleman to produce any warrant for it. The great landlords of Ireland who have been in the position to sell their estates to their tenants have not left the country, and they have declared over and over again, both in speeches and in resolutions which they have agreed to at the meetings of the Association that represents them, that their desire is to remain in the country, and that the ground upon which they support this Bill is, as stated by Lord Waterford the other day, that although there is much in the Bill that, is injurious and destructive of their interests, they regard the measure as a great statesmanlike measure for the improvement of the general condition of the country. They desire to live in their own homes, amongst their own people, and they desire to live on more happy and friendly terms than in the past. While they recognise the injury which, in many instances, this Bill must work, they realise the desperate position in which they have been placed. Their property has been reduced enormously in its value to them by a reckless agitation, and rendered absolutely unsaleable by the agency of boycotting, as the hon. Member for East Mayo boasted the other night, and they are, at the same time, threatened by the Party opposite with measures for further reducing their rents—measures which the same Party only a few years ago declared to be unjust and indefensible in principle; and which will almost annihilate what remains of the landlord's property. They have been accused, on false testimony, on reckless exaggeration and monstrous falsehood; they have been sentenced to an unjust sentence, and now they are to be "left for execution" by right hon. Gentlemen opposite, who have placed them in this position of difficulty and peril by the Act of 1881 — the Act by which those right hon. Gentlemen promised that what property remained to them should be absolutely secured to them. Speaking in my capacity of an Irish Member, I wish to say I cannot hide from myself the fact that some, at least, of the landlords of Ireland may be exposed to considerable injury by some of the provisions of this measure, but I feel very confident that if Amendments to such clauses of the Bill should be proposed not inconsistent with its principles—not inconsistent with what is right and reasonable, this House will listen to such arguments as may be advanced in support of them in a spirit of fairness and justice to this unhappy class of men. There is only one other subject on which I wish to make an observation, and it is the proposals with regard to the congested districts. Though I listened with admiration, as I often do, to the eloquence—the somewhat volcanic eloquence—of the hon. Member for East Mayo, I must say that when he came to deal with that part of the Bill which affects more particularly his own constituents and those parts of the country which lie close to the constituency he represents, I heard with great regret the tone in which he spoke. Whatever you may think of the relations of landlord and tenant in other parts of Ireland, however much you may be heated by Party debate and Party passion, is it not worth while for Irishmen on both sides to lay aside such feelings and prejudices in the presence of the problem which is here brought before us? This is the first honest and great attempt that has ever been made to deal with this part, the saddest part, of the Irish social problem. Whatever may be the prosperity of the rest of Ireland, there is always a certain amount of distress, if not existing, at all events hovering over the parts of the country which are called the congested districts. I have spent a great deal of my life in some portions of the congested districts of the West of Ireland. The people who live there are, in good seasons, a light-hearted and happy people. They live in wonderful contentment, notwithstanding the hard circumstances of their case; but whenever a time of distress falls upon Ireland, when the seasons are unfavourable, when the food of the people fails, then there comes a cry of agony and great distress from that desolate part of the island, there comes a cry like the hollow hopeless sound of the waves when they break upon the inhospitable rocks of the coast—a wail of misery and despair. There is no subject in the whole range of Irish social and political history so sad and so difficult to deal with as the question of these congested districts. The Government of the present day have, at all events, endeavoured to face this state of things, and I appeal to the House whether it would not be better for the hon. Member for East Mayo to apply his great ability and knowledge of the case in assisting the Government, if he can, to deal with this awful or terrible difficulty, rather than to heap contempt upon them and to throw every possible obstacle in the way of their solving the problem.

Mr. DILLON: That is exactly what I expressed a readiness to do.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I am extremely glad now to learn that I misunderstood the hon. Gentleman, and if he will really go into this business with us he will find there is not a Member on this side of the House who is not as eager as he is to help the congested districts in their difficulties. And now, before I sit down, I venture to congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary on the duty which has fallen to him, and the great opportunity, the great and well-deserved and well-earned opportunity, which he has achieved for dealing with the Irish land question. Two tasks the present Government undertook when they accepted office, besides, of course, the maintenance of the legislative union between the two countries. The one was to restore order in Ireland, to establish the sovereignty of the law of the Queen, and to make safe and sure what we considered was then wanting in many places —individual liberty. But the second task was to do something by practical legislation for the material prosperity of Ireland. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary has, in my judgment, with extraordinary ability and courage and industry achieved almost completely the first task we undertook to perform. Save in a few and isolated parts of

Ireland where the wretched land war is still waged, peace, order, liberty and respect for law have been restored, restored far faster than I—though I know something of the country and of its history—believed to be possible. But now it is, I am sure, a great pleasure and satisfaction to him to turn from that task, which, however necessary, must be for all public men a painful task, and standing on the firm ground which he has won by the policy which he has hitherto pursued, and following up some smaller efforts which he made last year and the year before to advance the material prosperity of Ireland, to propose to this House and this country and to the Irish people a measure for improving the Land Tenure of Ireland, a measure to deal with the great historic difficulty, that which has been so often the cause of the ruin and shame of Ireland in former times, a measure to give to the one great industry of that country the means of going happily forward on a prosperous course. These ends, I believe, will be to a great extent achieved by this Bill if only it is accepted and carried out in the same spirit as actuates those who are offering this "enormous boon," as it has been truly called, to the people of my native land.

*(6.0.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I think I reflect the opinion of all hon. Members when I say we always listen with pleasure to speeches from the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Plunket), and only regret that he does not more often speak in the House upon these subjects, with which he is so familiar. I listened to his speech just now with peculiar interest, for I could not but re-call the day, when, not so many years ago, he and I sat on the same Committee on the subject of Land Purchase in Ireland, and the right hon. Gentleman occupied a very different position in reference to this subject. I have no desire to refer to what took place on that occasion, but I confess I was curious to learn by what process the right hon. Gentleman had persuaded himself of the expediency of supporting a measure so far in advance of anything he then contemplated. As I understand, from the speech just delivered, the right hon. Gentleman has been mainly influenced by the passing of the Land Act of 1881, and the creation of dual ownership under that Act. Now, for my part, I have been influenced in a contrary direction by that Act. It has always appeared to me that, since the passing of that Act, it has become less important than before that a peasant proprietary should be established in Ireland on a very large scale by means of advances of English capital. It appears to me that the Act of 1881 gave to the Irish tenants an enormous boon by conferring security of tenure, judicial rents, and complete protection for their improvements. It has been said that the dual ownership created under that Act is a false and dangerous position, and one which ought to be got rid of. But may I remind the House that dual ownership is not an unfamiliar condition of things. It exists in many parts of Europe, and it exists in India, and even in Ireland it was not created by the Act of 1881. It practically existed in a part of Ireland before the Act was passed, and was known as the "Ulster custom," and the Act of 1881 only had the effect of giving statutory sanction to that custom, and of extending it to the whole of Ireland. It has long existed in the North of Ireland, and the agricultural prosperity which has existed there, as distinguished from the other parts of the island, is undoubtedly due to the fact of the existence of dual ownership there. Since the passing of the Act it appears to me to be vastly less important from an economic point of view to use State capital for the purpose of creating individual ownership of tenant farmers on a very large scale. I cannot regard the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken as the Representative of the Irish landlords. They have their Representatives from the North of Ireland, who, so far, have not spoken a single word in favour of the Bill. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham has grossly exaggerated the numbers of the minority in Ireland, and there is not the slightest proof that any considerable proportion of them are in favour of the Bill. It is well known there is a very great difference of opinion, even among the landlord class, with regard to the proposals of the Government, many of the landlords thinking, and with good reason, that the Bill, if passed, will ultimately bring about the extinction of their class in Ireland.

At all events, there is the gravest differences of opinion, and the principal organ of the class, the *Dublin Express*, is a vehement opponent of this Bill. Even among the tenants in the North of Ireland, a very sensible section of the minority, there is to be observed a considerable difference of opinion as to the expediency of the measure, and, so far as I know, at meetings held among Ulster tenants, the conclusions arrived at are that the Bill is unsatisfactory as it stands, and can only be made satisfactory to their interests by being made universal and compulsory in its application. The hon. Member for Fulham appears to think that those who have advocated moderate schemes in the direction of creating a peasant proprietary are bound to support the present Bill in all its extreme proposals. For my part, I protest against that doctrine. I have never been in favour of the total abolition of landlordism. The discussion of this Bill has been complicated and embarrassed by the number of alternative schemes which have been suggested. Suggestions have been made by the hon. Member for Cork, the hon. Member for Mayo, and the right hon. Member for Birmingham. The hon. Member for Cork has proposed a scheme limited to tenants below £50 rental. He suggests that their rents should be fined down to the extent of 50 per cent. by means of advances to their landlords, out of which their mortgages could be reduced. The scheme has much to recommend it in preference to that of the Government. It has, at all events, the great advantage of restricting the proposal to the smaller tenants, and it is to these and not to the larger tenants I have always considered any proposal of the kind should be extended. There is no more reason for extending that boon to large tenants in Ireland than to similar tenants in England. Without committing myself to the details of the scheme of the hon. Member for Cork, which are not fully developed, I will say it offers some very great advantages. It has the element of finality. It would not leave the Government face to face with a large body of small debtors, as the landlords will be primarily responsible, and would collect the interest due. The scheme would have the enormous advantage of the assent of the Irish Representatives. The scheme has been put forward as a compulsory measure; it would, therefore, exhaust the whole of the advance which the Government think it safe to propose. I will only say that, as part of a settlement of the Home Rule Question, it is eminently worthy of consideration, and every way preferable to the scheme of the Government. Then we have had the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham. In his speech the right hon. Gentleman practically admitted all the many objections which have been urged on this side of the House to the measure of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out the danger of legislating without the consent of the people of Ireland, and has merely stated, as against that, that there is a minority, numbering 2,000,000, which may take the opposite view. But there are no indications whatever that that minority thinks differently upon the Bill from the majority of the Irish tenants. By far the most important part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech was that in which he stated that it would be desirable to give popular Local Authorities a veto upon transactions under the Act. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman is practically an entirely new scheme, quite inconsistent with the scheme of the Government, and one which, in my opinion, has many advantages over that scheme, but it would inevitably necessitate the postponement of a scheme of purchase until after passing a Local Government Act. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham has said that he hopes to press this scheme on the Government, but he has not stated what steps he proposes to take, or what the effect would be of his suggestion not being adopted. The right hon. Gentleman does not threaten to vote against the Second Reading, which is the only effective way of bringing pressure to bear upon the Government. Nor have we had any intimation as to what course the Government propose to pursue with regard to those proposals. I will, under these circumstances, we have only to consider the Bill before the House, devote my remarks especially to the question of whether the Bill is likely to be a settlement of the question, even from the point of view of those who propose it. If the measure is likely to be a full and final settlement of the land question in Ireland, as the Government hope, there might be much to recommend it, and the use of English credit for that purpose might be justifiable and advisable. But it is my confident belief that the Bill will not prove to be a final settlement of the question, but, on the contrary, will raise up further difficulty and agitation, and must inevitably give rise to a demand for its being made universal and compulsory throughout the whole of Ireland, involving an advance of £150,000,000 or £160,000,000 before this question can be settled on the lines of the Bill. Let me assume that the measure has all the success hoped for by the Chief Secretary. Assuming that within four or five years the whole of the sum allocated under the Bill is applied for by tenant purchasers, what will the result be? We shall have within a reasonable period 120,000 tenants turned into owners under the operation of the Act, including those who already own their land under the two Ashbourne Acts. I will assume, also, that the price between them and their landlords is that which has been the average under the Ashbourne Acts, of which I believe the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has spoken with approval, and which I assume that the right hon. Gentleman supposes will continue to be the average price.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The right hon. Gentleman must not draw any such inference. I merely based an illustration upon what had actually taken place; I have no ground for assuming that the average value of land will remain the same.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I will assume that it will remain the same, and that on those terms the Bill will not be otherwise than successful. At any rate the right hon. Gentleman has spoken without disapproval of the effect of the Ashbourne Acts, and I am justified in assuming that for the next three or four years the average will remain the same. Of this I am quite certain, that if this average is very much higher there will not be many transactions under this Bill. The only chance of many transactions is that the average of the recent past will be maintained in the future. This average price has been 18 years' purchase. The result will be that 120,000 tenants will be turned into owners upon the terms that their average payment for interest will be 28 per cent. less than their previous rents, spread over a period of 49 years. But that is not the full measure of the advantage, for of these annual payments, one-fourth will represent re-payment of capital, and, therefore, ought not to be taken into account in a comparison with the previous rent. The boon to the tenant purchaser will be enormous, and can be at once realised by the purchaser selling his interest. Speculators in Ireland are already buying land in order to get the difference in price. A case has come under my notice where a man bought the tenant's interest in two farms, the one for £550 and the other for £650. He then agreed with the landlord to purchase these holdings under the Ashbourne Act at 19 years' purchase, and, having done so, he sold the holdings, subject to the reduced payments, for £960 and £1,220 respectively, making use of the Act to obtain the value of the State advances, although he had never been in possession and occupation of either farm. Now, under the full operation of the Act, and suppose it comes into effect in the manner I have suggested, we shall have two classes of occupiers, one class deriving these enormous benefits under this Act who are converted into owners in fact, and paying instalments much less than the amount of their previous rent; and then there will be a larger class still under the obligation to pay rent for ever. Of the whole number of tenants, three-fourths will be of the class under the obligation of paying rent for ever. Now, I ask, is it possible for such a condition of things to exist? Is it possible that there can be two classes of occupiers in Ireland at the same time, one paying rent for ever, and the other paying a reduced rent for a limited number of years, and then becoming absolute owner of his farm? Such a condition of affairs would be unstable, and the three-fourths of the tenants who will not benefit by the Bill will make a claim to be brought within the terms of the Act, and you will be unable to resist their demand to make the Act compulsory and universal. I have always realised this difficulty, and when I was Chairman of the Committee on the Bright Clauses, which sat in

1878-79, I always resisted any attempt of this kind, which would make the terms of purchase so favourable as to create an enormous difference between the two classes of occupiers. The clauses in the Act of 1881 were purposely restricted in this view, and framed so as to avoid turning tenants into owners upon the terms that they would pay considerably less than their previous rent. In 1885, when Lord Ashbourne's Act was passed, I raised the same objections; and again in 1888, on the renewal of the Act, in almost the same words as I have used to-day. In the General Election of 1886 I took the same line with reference to the scheme of purchase of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I predicted the time was not far distant when there would be an agitation on the part of the tenants left out from the operations of the Act, and I pointed out in, 1888, that the difficulty was already arising, and that comparisons were being made between tenants who had availed themselves of the Act and those of their neighbours whose landlords had not sold under the Act. My predictions are already in course of verification. In the autumn of last year an important deputation from the tenant-farmers of Ulster waited on the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in Dublin, with reference to the proposed Land Bill, and insisted that no scheme would be satisfactory which was not compulsory and universal. At the same time they pointed out that the contrasts being set up between the two classes of tenants, the purchasing tenants with a reduced rent gradually obtaining ownership and those less fortunate tenants continuing under the old rents, were creating much dissatisfaction, discontent, and agitation throughout the country. But I have still another witness to call in support of this view, namely, an hon. Member of this House with whom I do not often happen to agree on questions affecting Irish land. The hon. Member for South Tyrone, in an interesting article which he contributed to the *Nineteenth Century*, in October last, asserted that every estate sold under the Act rendered the position more intolerable in his own constituency, making discontented those tenants who were unable to reap the benefits of the Act. That is exactly my contention, and I say the result will be to produce a universal and irresistible movement on the part of the tenants throughout Ireland to make the terms of the Act compulsory throughout the country. Unless this is acceded to you will get an agitation for a further reduction of judicial rents. The position of inequality will be greatly aggravated by the provision in the Bill making those who have been unable to become owners guarantees for the payment by the favoured minority of their debts, and discontent and agitation will necessarily arise. Not only will the tenants not benefited by the Act have to guarantee the payments of those who are benefited, but for five years they will be deprived of the advantage of the £40,000 a year admitted to be due to the ratepayers of Ireland. I believe that the more this principle of purchase upon the suggested terms is extended the greater will be the discontent and the stronger will become the demand for the Act to be made universal and compulsory. It may be said that the Bill contemplates an ultimate extension by providing that the capital repaid may be advanced again; but this would mean for years to come no more than £400,000 a year, which would be a mere fleabite in proportion to the number who will demand a share. The measure, therefore, cannot be a settlement of the question. It must create a demand for its being made universal and compulsory or for a reduction of rents. I believe the former to be the more likely result, and in this view we must contemplate an ultimate advance, not of £33,000,000, but of £150,000,000. In fact, the scheme is open to precisely the same objections which were raised in 1886 to the scheme of Mr. Gladstone, when it was said, in opposition to his proposal to advance £50,000,000 to landlords who wished to sell, that it would ultimately involve £150,000,000. I always thought there was much force in the objection, and I stated at that time that I could not support the proposal as it then stood. But, whatever were its defects, the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman had some great merits which are wanting in this Bill. In the first place, it was part of a great scheme for settling the whole of the Irish question. It had also the hearty approval of the Irish people through their Representatives, and it also interposed between the Imperial Government and the class of small debtors a representative body whose interest it would be to collect the payments, and thus the danger of bringing the State face to face with a multitude of small debtors would be avoided. The present scheme, however, has none of these advantages. It is not part of a great settlement of the Irish question; on the contrary, it is an isolated measure which is not even immediately connected with a scheme of Local Government short of Home Rule. It is avowedly put forward in the hope of withdrawing the tenants from their natural leaders and inducing them to give up the demand for Home Rule—a most vain delusion. It is an idle dream. It leaves the State in direct relation to the multitude of small debtors, a position which every one who has looked into the question has admitted to be one of great danger. The First Lord of the Admiralty, in 1883, on a Motion for the extension of land purchase on the basis of this Bill, said that few conditions would be more dangerous to the Government than that it should be the creditor of a large portion of its subjects to whom it might be politically opposed, for it would be brought face to face with hundreds of thousands of tenants, to whom the doctrine of the repudiation of rent is too familiar. I agree with the noble Lord that it is a position of the greatest possible danger, and therefore I am opposed to this Bill. But, above all, I think a far more serious objection to this measure is that it has not received, and will not receive, the support of the Irish Members. That raises both financial and political dangers. If the Government have not the assent of the Irish people in the first instance to a proposal of this kind the fact will always be recorded against them, and will always be a source of financial danger and difficulty. It appears to me that the political danger is even greater, for it is wholly without precedent to pass a remedial measure against the will of the majority of the Irish people—with the single exception of the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act. Now, however, the Government are going to propose a remedial measure, and to force it upon Ireland against the wish of the Irish people. That I conceive to be a dangerous policy, and one wholly unprecedented in the history of this country.

It being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday.

ALLOTMENTS ACT (1887) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 147.)

Order for Committee read.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: In reference to a question which was addressed to me early in the Sitting, I wish to say that after full consideration it has been decided to take this Bill on Friday at 2 o'clock.

Committee deferred till Friday, at Two of the clock.

COMPANIES (MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION) BILL.—(No. 114.)

A Clause (Preference shares.)

"It shall be lawful for any Company by special resolution, if authorised to do so by its Articles as originally framed, or as altered by special resolution, and whether so authorised by its Memorandum of Association or not, to affix any preference in payment of dividend or in repayment of capital to any of its shares,"—(*Mr. Edmund Robertson,*)

—brought up, and read the first and second time.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Clause, to add the words—

"But such special resolution shall not take effect until it has been confirmed in England and Ireland by the High Court, and in Scotland by the Court of Session."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause added.

Amendments made.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION AND REDEMPTION OPERATIONS).

Copy ordered—

"Of Statements relating to the completed operations under 'The National Debt (Conversion) Act, 1888' (51 and 52 Vic. c. 2), and 'The National Debt Redemption Act, 1889' (52 Vic. c. 4)."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 153.)

COAL, IRONSTONE, AND OTHER MINES (RATING).

Return ordered—

"Showing the gross estimated rental and rateable value of the several Coal, Ironstone, and other Mines in each Poor Law Union in England and Wales, together with the basis or mode of assessment (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 457, of Session 1877."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged Mr. Henry H. Fowler from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, in respect of the Bankruptcy Bill, and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Causton.

Sir John Mowbray further reported: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, in respect of the Directors' Liability Bill, the following fifteen Members, namely: Sir Horace Davey, Mr. Dickson, Mr. Hankey, Colonel Hill, Mr. Kimber, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Neville, Mr. Quilter, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Royden, Mr. David Thomas, Mr. Warmington, Mr. John Wilson, and Mr. Powell-Williams.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled "An Act to make better provision for the exercise of the right of Presentation to Benefices in cases where the Right is now exerciseable by Parishioners or others forming a numerous class." [Presentation to Benefices Bill [*Lords.*]

And, also, a Bill, intituled "An Act to amend the existing Statutory Provisions respecting the Canonries, Prebends, and other Ecclesiastical offices of the Cathedral Church of Lichfield." [Lichfield Cathedral Bill [*Lords.*]

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

MOTIONS.

LICENSING LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

*(9.0.) Lord R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.), in rising,

"To call attention to the Licensing Laws, and to ask for leave to bring in a Bill consolidating and amending the Law of Licensing,"

said: I must confess my regret that the fortunes of the Ballot were unfavourable, and that instead of submitting a Second Reading discussion to the House, as I might have done had I been more fortunate, I am obliged to take advantage of a Motion asking leave to introduce a Bill in order to bring on a discussion which must, to a great extent, be of a somewhat indefinite nature. I should have been glad, if possible, to have moved a Resolution; but I believe that it has been decided by you, Sir, that a Resolution on the Licensing Laws, while a Bill dealing with them is on the Order Book of the House of Commons, would not be in order. Therefore, I take this opportunity of calling the attention of the House to a subject which I think the House will admit, is of the greatest possible importance. The Licensing Laws of this country, whether they ought to be amended or not, are a matter which, in the opinion of many in this House and of multitudes outside it, take a first and foremost place in public problems, although undoubtedly they have not for a long time come before Parliament in a comprehensive form. This is a question which for years past has attracted public and Parliamentary attention, and it is a question which has been examined by more than one Parliamentary Committee. But the House is aware that the examination of a great question by a Committee by no means implies that the question will be dealt with by Parliament. Parliament has got into the bad habit—apparently the inveterate habit—of referring great social questions to Committees, and then of imagining that, having taken that action, it has dealt with them. It reminds me of a gentleman with whom I am acquainted, who was in the habit of dealing with his bills in a very methodical way. He docketed them, arranged them in alphabetical order, tied them together very neatly, and then put them away in a drawer, with the remark, "Thank goodness! I have done the civil thing by them." So Parliament, with its Committees, thinks it has done a civil thing to great questions, and has then banished them altogether from its mind. It is difficult to over-estimate the magnitude of the evils which arise from the excessive consumption of alcoholic liquors by the people. Crime, poverty, and misery of every kind have been authoritatively and directly traced to the excessive consumption of alcohol. I do not intend in these matters to rely, or ask the House to rely, on anything which I might adduce as my personal opinion. I must confess that I am a somewhat recent recruit to the forces which have been endeavouring to bring this question before the House, and I have no claim whatever to take up the position of an authority, or even of an apostle. But I would venture to quote to the House—though that is generally a wearisome proceeding — extracts, some of them lengthy, from various Reports of Committees and speeches made by high authorities. I hope the House will bear with me if I somewhat excessively trespass on their attention, because of the great importance and weight of the extracts which I shall read. So long ago as the year 1849 a Committee of the House of Lords, under the Presidency of the late Lord Harrowby, investigated the evils arising from an excessive indulgence in alcoholic liquor by the people in consequence of the inordinate multiplication of the establishments for the sale of liquor. That Committee used these remarkable words—

> "It was already sufficiently notorious that drunkenness is the main cause of crime, disorder, and distress in England, and it appears that the multiplication of houses for the consumption of intoxicating liquors, which under the Beer Act has risen from 88,930 to 123,396, has been thus in itself an evil of the first magnitude, not only by increasing the temptations to excess which are thus presented at every step, but by driving houses, even those under the direct control of the magistrates, as well as others originally respectable, to practices for the purpose of attracting custom, which are degrading to their own character and most injurious to morality and order. Coincident with this increase in the facilities for intoxication it appears that crime has increased in a frightful ratio, the commitments for trial in England and Wales in the years 1848-49 being in the proportion to those of 1830-31, the two first years after the enactment of the Beer Act, of 156 to 100; and that is not a mere casual coincidence, the Committee have the strongest reasons to believe, from the general evidence submitted to them, but more especially from that of the chief constables of police and the chaplains of gaols, who have the best opportunities, the one of watching the character of the beershops and of those who frequent them, the other of tracing the causes of crime and the career of criminals."

I must point out that that is no fanatical teetotal pronouncement, but the Report of a practical Committee of Peers, presided over by a noble Lord who, in his own day, was highly respected as a practical man. I come to a more important Committee — that of the House of Commons, which sat in 1854, and I would particularly draw attention to the composition of that Committee. It was presided over by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Charles Villiers), and it contained, amongst others, Mr. Lowe (afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer), Sir George Grey (afterwards Home Secretary), Sir John Pakington, Mr. Sotheron Estcourt, and others of like ability. They were men of moderation, experience, and authority; and what language do they use on the subject? They say—

> "Your Committee do not feel it necessary to follow further the evidence upon the connection between intoxicating drinks and crime. It has directly or indirectly been the subject of inquiry at different times, and has been reported upon by numerous Committees of your honourable House, who bear unvarying testimony to the general intemperance of criminals and the increase and the diminution of crime in direct ratio of the increased or diminished consumption of intoxicating drinks. It is universally admitted that the great majority of criminals are intemperate, and that, as might be looked for from the hours at which their unlawful pursuits are carried on, their idle and lurking habits, their necessity to meet their associates without being open to suspicion, and their rapid alternations of abundance and want, the lowest class of publichouses and beershops are their most frequent haunts. The evidence already referred to (and which, coming from persons of such ample experience, is entitled to especial weight) goes further and tends to establish that whatever individual propensity there may be to crime is with few exceptions brought into activity by habits of intemperance, that children are driven forth to crime to feed an appetite for drink which bears no control and knows no natural affection, and that even criminals cease from crime if they cease to be drunken."

This is no teetotal sermon. It is the grave pronouncement of a Committee of this House, and no Committee could be entitled to more respect. I had the greatest difficulty in procuring a copy of the Report of the Committee, and the one I obtained was an old copy which bore the name on the outside of Gathorne Hardy—that is the present Lord Cranbrook—and which was fully annotated by him on the margin. I do not know whether the Government may consider the propriety of re-printing that Report. Although it was made in 1854, an enormous portion of it bears directly on what we have to deal with now. I went over to the East End of London one night to observe, as far as I could, the practices that went on at the various drinking establishments in that part. I saw a sight which I did not know how to adequately describe to the House; but in reading this Report I came on a passage which practically describes what I saw that night. This is what the Committee of 1854 state—

> "A witness who acted as temperance missionary in St. Giles's states that he lately visited the whole of the public houses in the New Cut. . . . In one house he counted 50 persons drinking; they were serving as fast as they could. Among the number were women with children in their arms. Upon one butt there was an infant fast asleep, and the father and mother were drunk by the side. Against the counter was a little child fast asleep. At one house the police were obliged to stand with their staves to prevent the people from pushing the doors in as the publican and his servants drove them out to prevent them getting more drink and to enable the public house to be closed at the time prescribed by Act of Parliament."

Practically, I saw that sight with my own eyes in 1889, which shows how little progress has been made in spite of all these weighty pronouncements. I saw practically the same state of things, and relatively—considering the advance of civilisation—a worse state of things than existed at the time when the Committee reported. Then there was a Committee of the House of Lords which reported in the year 1879, and which went very fully into the question of drunkenness. But I think I have quoted enough authorities to render it beyond dispute that an excessive consumption of alcoholic drink by the people and excessive crime are merely cause and effect. Now, Sir, I pass on to consider what has been the course of recent legislation. Very little has been done. The present Lord Aberdare, when Home Secretary, as Mr. Bruce, introduced a Bill for the comprehensive reform of the Licensing Laws, which I greatly regret to say led to no result. It was produced by him in a speech of great power, and curiously enough it was received by the House with great approval. Speeches were made by my hon. Friend the Member for Cockermouth (Sir W. Lawson), the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Essex (Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson), who has done me the honour to put his name on the back of this Bill, and by others, all of whom approved with great cordiality of the Bill produced in 1871. I am not old enough to recollect, and I have not been able to ascertain, the precise causes which led to the precipitate abandonment of that Bill. It was abandoned, owing to the Party feeling of the time, and considerable unpopularity accrued to the Government, very unjustly I think, for having introduced the Bill. In 1872 Mr. Bruce produced a much smaller Bill, which practically had the effect of enacting stricter police regulations and earlier hours of closing. But the main question, namely, what was admitted to be at the time, as I think it will be admitted even now, the greatly excessive number of public houses in proportion to the number of people, was untouched by the Bill of 1872, and has remained untouched. Sir, the House will, perhaps, allow me to quote from the speech of Mr. Bruce, who was one of the most distinguished Home Secretaries this House has known—a man of perfectly cool, calm, and moderate character, with a very clear head, with great experience of business of every kind, and who, when he made his speech, had been Home Secretary for nearly three years, and spoke with all the authority and knowledge and experience that the Home Office could give him. What did he say? Mr. Bruce said—

> "That the measure he was asking leave to introduce was one which had been demanded by the general voice of the country, with an earnestness and unanimity to which he recollected hardly any parallel. The question was one which had deeply stirred the hearts and feelings of all classes of Society. Committees of both Houses of Parliament, the Church in Convention, Ministers of every Religious Denomination, Judges and Magistrates collectively and individually, Boards of Health and Boards of Guardians, had all united in proclaiming and

impressing upon Parliament the mischiefs which had arisen from the existing facilities for the purchase of intoxicating liquors. Social and sanitary reformers, who spent their lives in doing good, had declared that their labours for the moral and social improvement of their fellow men were baffled at every turn by the recklessness and moral degradation which sprung from and were occasioned by the liquor traffic. They told us how our prisons, lunatic asylums, and workhouses were filled with inmates whose career had originated in their passion for intoxicating liquor. The back streets, courts, and alleys of most large towns were filled with a squalid and dangerous population, who owed their degradation to the same cause, and even the rural districts were not free from the curse. Above all, the working classes of this country, who were the most sensitive to its effects, and who were affected by and felt most the consequences of the system had, with united voice, called upon Parliament to deliver them from temptation."

Mr. Bruce went on to say—

> "That he would not pause to ask whether drunkenness was, or was not, on the increase, because he felt satisfied that the evil was so great, as to be a blot upon our social system and a disgrace to our civilisation."

Now, that is not the hon. Baronet the Member for Carlisle, but the Home Secretary of a Liberal Government, and perhaps, I may be allowed to say, with all sincerity, one of the best Liberal Governments this country has ever seen. Surely, such a pronouncement on the subject is of immense authority. There is nothing rhetorical in it. It is the deliberate statement of the opinions and views of the Secretary of State, Minister of the Interior, upon the excessive facilities for the consumption of alcoholic drinks by the people, in words that apply almost entirely to the state of things at the present day. Mr. Bruce made five propositions, to which he expected the general concurrence of the House, and for which he apparently obtained concurrence that night. His first proposition was that there were far more licences than were required—the proportion being one to every 182 of the population. His second proposition was that the method of issuing licences was unsatisfactory, that there was no guidance to the Magistrates as to the number required, and that they had no responsibility whatever. Again, that proposition is as true now as it was then, and can be proved to demonstration by the Return which the Government have been good enough to give me, showing the number of licensed establishments in various Petty Sessional Divisions, in proportion to population. What it shows is this, that the Magistrates act without the slightest system, method, or order, that licences are issued, as a general rule, with some bright exceptions, in a purely haphazard way, that there is not the slightest consideration by modern Licensing Authorities, or —I do not say it is so now—at any rate, there has not been in recent years the slightest consideration as to how many premises for the consumption of alcoholic liquor were really required. That has been a consideration totally absent from the minds of the Licensing Authorities. The third proposition made by Mr. Bruce was that there were no sufficient guarantees for the orderly management or effective supervision of public houses. That has been dealt with, to some extent, by the Bill of 1872. The fourth proposition, which still exists, in spite of legislation, is that the laws against adulteration are insufficient and imperfectly enforced. That is true at the present day, as it was true then. The quality of the liquor supplied, certainly as regards spirits in a greater degree, and as regards beer in a smaller degree, is often of a most inferior character, and often most villainously adulterated. The House will agree that the adulteration of English spirits by German spirits is most abominable; yet such spirits are served out, dram after dram, by hundreds of thousands and by millions annually to poor people, in a manner such as the House would hardly credit. I do believe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Her Majesty's Government ought to take seriously into consideration the policy of not allowing spirits to be taken out of bond until they have been at least two years in bond, for I am assured by a high authority that if that could be carried out an enormous importation of German spirits, inferior spirits, poisonous spirits, into the country would be materially curtailed, and the spirits which would be afterwards supplied to the classes would be of a far less poisonous description. The fifth proposition was that the hours during which public houses were allowed to be kept open admitted of reduction. That was dealt with, to some extent, in the Bill of 1872. But I must point out to my great regret that Mr. Bruce's Bill of 1872 excited unpopularity at the time, from some cause or other, and that unpopularity was naturally taken advantage of by political opponents. And the Government of 1874, which came into office, passed an Act which seriously impaired the provisions of the Act of 1872. I would wish to draw the attention of the House to a very important matter in connection with this subject. Mr. Bruce, in his Bill of 1871, laid down the standard for the number of public houses, which, in the opinion of the Home Secretary and of the Government of that day, were the maximum which was requisite for the wants of the people. Mr. Bruce laid down that in towns of under 1,500 population, one public house was sufficient; in towns of under 3,000, two were sufficient; under 4,000, three; and over 4,000, he allowed one public house for every additional 1,000. In the country, he prescribed in his Bill that where the population was under 900 one public house was sufficient; under 1,200, two; under 1,800, three; and one more for each additional 600 of population. I attach importance to this standard, made by a responsible Minister, who had studied the question with more care and attention than had ever been brought to bear upon it, perhaps, by any Government. What would have been the effect of the Bill if it had been passed into law? The number of licensed houses in London, which, in 1872, was, roughly speaking, 10,000, would have been reduced in 10 years to 3,000. In England and Wales, the number, excepting the Metropolis, amounted to 109,000, and that would have been reduced in 10 years to 33,000. The House should bear in mind that this standard was not seriously attacked by the trade. I have a pamphlet attacking the principles of compensation which were provided by the 10 years' limit. But the standard of limitation was not considered by the trade in any degree unreasonable, and, so far as the Parliamentary debate shows, it was taken to be as fair and equitable. In the days of Mr. Bruce, premises for the consumption of intoxicating liquors numbered one to every 182 of the population. In 1854, the public houses and beer houses numbered altogether 131,413. In 1861, the number was 108,155, or one to every 185; in 1871, the number was, as I have said, one to every 182; in 1888, the number was 105,302, or one to every 283 of the people. But, of course, it must be borne in mind that the population since 1861 has increased by 48 per cent., and, therefore, the decrease of 2 per cent. in the number of public houses per 100 people is relatively larger than appears for the figures which I quote. There has been a decrease in the number of public houses, and the decrease, taking the population into account, is by no means to be ignored. But against that decrease, I must set off three very important factors. In the first place, the large increase since 1861 in the number of off-licences, which have increased from 11,614 in 1861 to 28,649 in 1888. In another year or two it will be trebled. Another point to which I wish to draw the attention of the House is the recent springing into existence of a very large number of clubs among the working classes — clubs which are brought into existence for no other purposes than the illicit and illegal consumption of intoxicating liquors. I must also set off against the decrease in the number of public houses another fact, which was commented on by the Committee of the House of Lords in 1879, namely, that a very large number of licensed premises in this country have made very great increases in their size and accommodation. The large number of what are called gin palaces, which now are to be found on a comparatively gigantic scale in many of our large towns were almost unknown in the days when Mr. Bruce brought in his Bill. Now, Sir, I want to put a practical question to the House. Does the amount of drunkenness in the country depend upon the number of public houses? That is a question which has been debated very much by authorities on the Licensing Laws. My own opinion is that we have at present hardly any facts before us that will enable us to answer it. Superficially it would appear that drunkenness among the people must depend to a large extent upon the number of houses which exist for providing alcoholic liquor, or, in fact, upon the profusion or non-profusion of facilities that exist for obtaining liquor. That view, I must admit, has been contested by persons of high authority, but the decrease at any particular time has been, relatively to the population, so small that it is difficult to draw any conclusions from it. Very strong evidence was given before the Committee of 1854 to the effect that a reduction of public houses did produce a reduction in the consumption of alcoholic liquors, and it is clear that the Committee to a large extent agreed with the evidence. The Committee of the House of Lords took similar evidence, and among the witnesses was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), who, in his evidence on this subject before the Committee, said—

> "The enormous number of public houses, which is clearly out of all proportion to anything like the legitimate wants of the people, must tend to increase the temptation. In the first place, it has its effect on the people; people cannot pass this number of houses without being more tempted than they would with a fewer number. I do not attach much importance to that; but I attach great importance to the number of persons directly interested in increasing the trade. There are 1,900 people in Birmingham with their families, and all the members of their little circle who are under the necessity of making a livelihood out of this trade. If there were only half the number they would do less trade; perhaps not in proportion to the reduction in the number of persons, but still there would be a greater diminution. Then the number of houses excites competition. Those men living so close together cannot afford to offend their customers in any way, and any demand that is made upon them they must meet, not merely from fear of losing the immediate custom, which they are unwilling to lose, but from fear of losing the whole custom of the man; and there is no doubt that improper practices, such as gambling and such things, are allowed to go on because the publican, although he may not approve of it, does not like to set his face directly against it."

Now, Sir, that is a remarkable, a telling, and an important statement bearing on this question, and the Committee state that the majority of the witnesses held the opinion that the number of licensed houses had a direct effect on intemperance. The question of the number of public houses in proportion to the people is one to which I attach enormous importance. I noticed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), who above all other Chancellors of the Exchequer would be most careful in the expressions he made use of in his Budget Speech, the other day in his Financial Statement talked of "the enormous multitude of licences, which have so largely contributed to the drink bill of the nation." I take it that the great authorities in this House, representing, probably, the great bulk of opinion in this House, concur in the view that the number of public houses in the country is largely in excess of the wants of the people. But I go further, and say that the leading representatives of the licensed victuallers are by no means disposed to dispute that opinion. I cannot help saying that my experience of the trade, whether wholesale or retail, is that the most representative, the most powerful, and the most experienced members of the trade are sincerely and genuinely desirous of considerable reforms on this question of the Licensing Law. They are most anxious to see the trade placed on a sound, sensible, and statesmanlike footing which may be reasonably expected to endure for another 25 or 30 years. Now, if, as I hold, the number of public houses is largely and grossly in excess of the legitimate wants of the people, what does that mean? I hold that it brings responsibility home to all of us in this House, and it means that Parliament and the State, by allowing such a condition of things to exist, force upon the people the consumption of alcoholic liquor, which, without such pressure, would not be consumed. The system of reckless profusion in the sale of alcoholic liquor, and the fatal facility of recourse to the public houses makes it extremely difficult for multitudes of persons, in view of the hardships of their lives, to avoid or resist intemperance. I should like to give a curious illustration of how "great effects from little causes spring," and how the State, by unreflective action, may contribute to the consumption of alcoholic liquor. I happened when I was at the Treasury to meditate the abolition of the half-sovereign. I was persuaded that the half-sovereign was an altogether wicked little coin, that it was expensive to maintain, that it was easily lost, and that if it were abolished we might make a very handsome profit on the coinage of silver. I found that the half-sovereign was not only a wicked little coin, but an extremely profligate coin, and that it was largely responsible for the consumption of alcoholic liquor. I ascertained that, as a rule, workmen's wages are paid in half-sovereigns, and they resort to the public house for change, and, naturally, in an enormous proportion of cases, a considerable portion of the half-sovereign is left behind in the public house. Therefore, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer should think fit to abolish this wicked, profligate little coin, and to replace it by silver, he will make a profit on the silver, and, I think, appreciably injure his Excise revenue. But to go back to the point I was on. We know that, whether for the purpose of obtaining change or drink in town or country, public houses meet us at every step, inviting and almost compelling the entrance of passers by, and I hold it to be certain that in nine cases out of ten, if the public house were not there, the people would not miss it, and would not wish to have recourse to such an establishment. You have now great forces at work in favour of temperance, forces which were not at work in 1854 when the Committee of that day reported. In the first place you have your education, on which you spend £4,000,000 a year, and from which you expect to obtain great results in the moral elevation of the people. In 1854 State education had but very slender operation. Then you have in the present day what you did not have in 1854—elaborate facilities for the promotion of thrift. You have also a force in favour of temperance which the Committee of 1854 desired to see established, namely, a large number of parks and gardens, museums and libraries, maintained at the public expense, to which the masses are invited to resort, and do resort, in preference to the public houses. You have all these great forces working in favour of temperance, carried on, no doubt, at considerable expense either to the State or to Local Authorities, and yet this is absolutely certain—having been curiously brought out by the Committee of 1879—that the consumption of alcohol is much about the same as it was 30 or 40 years ago. It has hardly decreased at all. All the reports are negative. They say that probably the consumption of alcohol has not increased, and that, on the whole, the state of things is probably not worse than it was 10 years ago. And yet it clearly ought to be much better, and would be had we earlier dealt with these Licensing Laws. And now I should like to draw the attention of the House to the numbers of arrests for drunkenness in England and Wales, although the arrests are in one sense very misleading, as they do not show the amount of drunkenness. In the three years ending 1887 there were 40,384 arrests on Sundays and 402,352 on week-days; and in the three years ending 1888 there were 41,316 arrests on Sundays and 444,944 on week-days. So that absolutely the arrests for drunkenness have increased. That proves as clearly as possible what I shall, I hope, drive home, that drunkenness is on the increase. The tendency of the police is to interfere as little as possible with a drunken person, unless he is violently disorderly and a nuisance and danger, and, therefore, the only arrests made are of persons in an extreme state of drunkenness. I have it on authority that, in order to arrive at the number of persons who get perfectly drunk, we might safely multiply the number of arrests by six, which would give for three years 240,000 persons arrested on Sundays and 2,700,000 on week-days. In addition, if we want to realise the consumption of alcohol by the people we must argue in this way. If there are these enormous numbers of drunken persons, how great are the numbers of those who have undoubtedly taken a great deal more than is good for them, and a great deal more than their scanty earnings would justify? If we speculate on figures of that kind we then begin to realise the gigantic drink bill of the country of £130,000,000 or £140,000,000, an expenditure on alcohol estimated at £22 per annum for each family of five persons; and if we only think of the enormous number of families earning between them less than £100 a year, we are led, if there is any foundation for these figures, to the conclusion that the consumption of alcohol is a matter which deserves the immediate consideration of Parliament. I deduce this as the consequence of these statistics, that the great temperance forces at work have had no effect in decreasing drunkenness. I have heard former Chancellors of the Exchequer, the right hon.

Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) and the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), descant on the slackened yield upon the Estimate for beer and spirits, and I have heard them comfort themselves by expressing the opinion that the diminished consumption arose from the temperance movement, and from forces operating in that direction. But the recent Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has absolutely dissipated such an idea, and proved that it is a fallacy. It has opened the eyes of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the existence of an evil of the magnitude of which we none of us had any conception. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget speech, which I will describe as a great temperance speech, told us that—

> "Nearly £2,500,000 out of a surplus of £3,250,000 were due to an absolutely extraordinary circumstance. The £2,500,000 excess of revenue of which I have spoken have been due to an extraordinary rush to alcohol. I now wish to call the particular attention of the Committee to the fact that the increase in the consumption of alcohol in the past year as compared with its predecessor has augmented the receipts from alcoholic beverages by a sum exceeding £1,800,000. Let me remind the Committee that for 11 years the revenue from spirits had been declining, and for two years it had remained stationary. And, speaking of forecasting a revenue, if I had come before this House and said I believed there would be an increase in consumption of alcoholic beverages in the year which would bring in £1,800,000 more, I should have been considered either a lunatic or a libeller of the consuming classes of the country."

That shows that the doctrine of former Chancellors of the Exchequer, that the spread of the temperance movement was checking the consumption of alcohol, was unfounded and mistaken. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said to the House of Commons that—

> "The net receipts on all consumable articles except spirits, wine, and beer actually fell short of my Estimates by, in round numbers, £130,000. But when we come to alcoholic drinks I admit there is a very different tale to tell. The net receipts from all alcoholic drinks amounted to £29,265,000, as compared with the Estimate of £27,430,000, and as compared with the net produce of £27,157,000 in the year before. The Beer Duty exceeded my Estimate by £270,000, foreign spirits by £421,000, and home spirits by no less than £1,010,000; and the duty on wine exceeded the Estimate by £120 000. It is on drink, and on drink alone, that as regards consumable articles the revenue was under estimated for the last year. And the Committee will notice that this rush to alcohol has been universal. Some have rushed to the beer barrel, others to the spirit bottle, others to the decanter, but all classes seem to have combined in toasting the prosperity of the country, and have largely increased the revenue. I call the special attention of the House of Commons to this extraordinary circumstance—a circumstance which will be deplored by almost every one, for many reasons, and which places upon the Government and upon the House an increasing liability to deal with the question of the consumption of alcoholic drinks."

The House can hardly pass by with neglect such strong language from so high a Minister of the Crown, and one so well entitled to speak on such a subject with unquestioned authority. The Chancellor of the Exchequer goes on to say—

> "The consumption of rum has increased by 12 per cent.; British spirits by 7 per cent.; brandy by nearly 6 per cent.; and other sorts of spirits by nearly 5 per cent. I cannot exaggerate the impression which these figures make upon myself. The more you look into them the more extraordinary they seem to be. I have wanted to show what this additional consumption of 12 per cent. in rum means if reduced to intelligible proportions. I understand that rum is generally asked for in public-houses by the half-quartern or the half-gill, either of those terms meaning about one-eighth of a pint. The retailer is allowed by Act of Parliament to mix water as long as the spirit is not reduced below 25 degrees under proof. The price asked for a half gill of rum is 2½d. or 3d.; thus the whole of the rum consumed in the United Kingdom, if supposed to have been drunk in these drams, in the year 1888 was 245,000,000 of drams, and that enormous amount has been increased by 30,000,000 drams during the course of the past financial year. I hope the Committee will consider that this is a matter which we ought to look fully in the face. We ought to understand, not only what 12 per cent. means, but, when you go into detail, how it works out. It is an extraordinary historical fact that in the year 1875-76, which was the greatest drinking year on record, there was precisely the same rush in precisely the same proportions of these different classes of spirits, and at that time, too, the consumers of wine followed generally in the wake of the consumers of spirits and beer; and so it appears that, notwithstanding all our hopes, increased prosperity means, not an increased consumption of all the other great articles, but has unfortunately meant, and does mean, a great increase in the consumption of alcoholic liquors. I have now explained how we have a surplus of £3,200,000, of which £1,800,000 is accounted for by the increase in alcoholic beverages. Let me now descend from these stupendous and sensational figures to the more ordinary figures of the Budget."

That extraordinary speech, coming on the top of every other authority which I have quoted in this year

1890, when we thought that we were getting so temperate, and that the habits and morals of the people were improving, shows that if we were, as undoubtedly we were 30 years ago, a drunken people, that adjective can be applied to us now. I think the House will admit that nothing can be more serious than the facts and figures to which I have ventured to direct its attention. For that reason I welcome the intention of the Government with respect to a Bill which they propose to introduce dealing with the question of licensing. I understand that Bill is directed to prohibiting the granting of new licences, and I hail such a measure as an indispensable preliminary to any reform of the Licensing Laws. But such a measure as that touches but a very small part of the evil it is sought to remedy. If it is the duty of the Government to deal with this question, that duty they will readily admit is not even approximately discharged—even if they are successful, as I hope they will be—by bringing forward such a Bill. I have, I fear, somewhat rashly attempted a more ambitious measure, which I will explain to the House. The Bill I ask leave to introduce is as wide in its scope as the Bill of Mr. Bruce in 1871. It attempts to amend, simplify, and consolidate the law on this subject. I may say in my defence, if I am regarded as presumptuous, that I have been for weeks past in communication with many authorities on this licensing question. I have had the advantage of the freest and frankest communication with the representatives of the trade, and have received from them every possible assistance. I have also had the great advantage of communication with my hon. Friend the Member for Cockermouth (Sir W. Lawson); and I gladly acknowledge that if any good should result from the action I invite the House to take the hon. Member will have mainly contributed to it. I have also been in communication with various Temperance Associations, notably that most excellent institution the Church of England Temperance Society. I have studied many Blue Books; I have waded through many speeches; I have read many pamphlets; I have endeavoured to the best of my ability, before venturing to subject a project to the House of Commons, to master the whole of the subject The main principle of the Bill is popular control over the issue of licences. That is a principle which has been accepted, I think I may say, by both sides of the House, although it is carried to a different extent by some persons than by others. Though the Returns which I have obtained do and must be taken by all persons, to condemn the results of magisterial discretion, I do not wish to be understood in any way to blame the magistrates, who, I believe, have done their duty as well as they could. Nothing like corruption, or a trace of it, has influenced them in the discharge of their duty; but from one cause or another it must be admitted that the magistrates have not been able or willing to decrease the number of licences. I do not imagine for a moment that the giving over of the issue of licences to popular control is going to make the people of England sober in a year or two. There is an expression much made use of in former days by those who opposed Licensing Law reform, that "You can't make people sober by Act of Parliament." You cannot—it is quite true—but I tell you what you can do. You can give the people by Act of Parliament powers to make themselves sober. My belief is that the whole instincts of the people are really on the side of sobriety if they have the power to get their own way; and the blame for the drunkenness that exists cannot be laid on the people, because they have not had even the shadow of power over the issue of licences. The popular Representative Bodies which I propose in my Bill to control the issue of licences are the Municipal Councils in the boroughs and the County Councils in the counties. I know it has been urged that it would be better to give the power to bodies elected solely for this purpose; but after long consideration of the point I have come to the conclusion that, on the whole, the arguments are in favour of entrusting the power to the existing Councils. In the first place, they are bodies of great weight and authority; they are less liable to be swayed either in one way by trade interests or in the other by temperance fanaticism than a body which had solely to deal with licences; they will on the whole, I think, be moderate, and will not be inclined to go ahead of public opinion; they will be found to be composed of probably the best and the most experienced men in the locality, men accustomed to matters of local government; and lastly — recognising the extreme importance of dealing with this question rather by a consensus of Parties than by a conflict of Parties—I think it will be found that this proposal will encounter the least opposition either in this House or in the other. There is also this to be said in its favour, that the establishment of a separate body for licensing purposes would mean additional elections. The recurrence of elections of public Local Bodies is already quite frequent enough, and if we increase the number we shall run some risk of wearying and nauseating the public, who would cease to take an interest in them; and without public interest these bodies would become useless and impotent. I proceed in a simple, and what may be called a rough and ready fashion—in my Bill to direct the Councils to divide the areas under their authority into Licensing Districts, and to divide themselves into as many Committees as there are Licensing Districts, each Committee to be the Licensing Authority for the district. But I go even further in applying the principle of popular control. I have provided that, in certain circumstances, and under certain conditions, there should be brought into operation that which is called the direct veto —that is to say, that if in a certain parish two-thirds of the ratepayers on the municipal register voted for the prohibition of the granting of licences, the vote should operate against the granting of all retail licences. There is a good deal to be said in favour of the equity of such a proposal. On the face of it it is not unfair that where you find a large and preponderating majority in a restricted area who desire to live under conditions which in their belief conduce to order and morality—it is hard on such a majority that a comparatively small minority should be able to prevent them having their way. And what makes it especially hard in this case is that the power which you refuse to entrust, or which you may possibly refuse to entrust, to so large and preponderating a majority is a power which under the law of the land is actually enjoyed by the owners of property. An owner of many thousands of acres or of a large portion of a town may, and frequently does, no matter how much the persons on that property may object, prohibit the establishment of a single house for the sale of intoxicating liquor. Therefore, you allow to the owner of property a power which may be exercised in the most tyrannical manner, which I believe in certain cases has been exercised tyrannically, and which may be exercised against the wishes of the majority of the people. I think that there is a great deal to be said for allowing a preponderating majority of the inhabitants to prohibit the establishment of houses for the retail sale of drink. I will give the House a curious instance of what I have been saying. The town of Jarrow is alluded to in the Report of the Lords Committee of 1879. One-half of that town belongs to a firm which employ large numbers of working men and allow no licensed establishment in that half of the town. The other half of the town is not so owned, and licensed houses largely prevails. That is a large power to be exercised by one firm over hundreds of working men. Another instance is the town of Middlesbrough, which stands out rather well in the Return which I moved for, the percentage of public houses per 1,000 of the population being only 1·3. But a gentleman wrote to me from Middlesbrough to explain how that is. A very large portion of the town belongs to the Pease family, and they do not allow, or they prevent as far as they can, the establishment of any house for the sale of intoxicating liquor; while another portion of the town belongs to a gentleman who absolutely prohibits the opening of such houses. Therefore, the real proportion of licensed houses in Middlesbrough per 1,000 is, in reality, greater than the Return makes it, because they are all established in one restricted area. I must say that if you give that power to an individual—I do not say that I wish to see that power taken away—I think it is hard to say that under certain circumstances you will not intrust similar power to the popular vote. At all events, the House will admit that the matter is one which is deserving of argument and discussion. I do not regard the question of direct veto as absolutely material to my Bill or to any Licensing Law reform; but I know that the Temperance Body attach enormous importance to such a provision, and, considering their long labours in the cause of temperance, I frankly admit that they have a right to some concession in this matter, at least as a subject of experiment. I would also point to one beneficial effect of the establishment of the direct veto. It has been argued on more than one occasion that if you make the County Council the Licensing Authority you will introduce into its election violent party feeling between the Temperance Party and the anti-Temperance Party—in fact, introduce into the election what I may call the *odium alcoholicum.* But if you, under certain circumstances, give to the inhabitants of a parish power to prohibit the issue of licences, obviously the effect of that will be to relieve the County Council of an enormous amount of pressure which might be put upon them by one party or the other. The Temperance Party will then concentrate their efforts on parishes or localities where they think they will be able to work themselves most beneficially, while those interested in the trade will concentrate their efforts in the same parts, and we shall thus relieve the County Councils of an enormous amount of trouble. The next provision in my Bill is one for the simplification of the licences. Under the present law there are 12 different forms of licence, only three of which are at all generally applied for. Under this Bill the chief licences will be what are known as the full publican's licence and the refreshment house wine and beer licence. The only licence which the Licensing Authority will be able to grant for consumption on the premises for the wholesale and retail sale of wines, spirits, and beer is the full publican's licence. Another form of licence which is provided for is the refreshment house wine and beer licence, which I am led to believe may be a useful licence in the rural districts, where houses may be established at a lower rating than is provided for in my Bill for public houses in towns, and where facilities for meals to the customer may be afforded as well as facilities for drinking; but under the Bill if a person wishes to get a licence for the retail sale of spirits he will have to obtain a full publican's licence. Then there will be a restricted form of licence to be granted to hotels which are not public houses and railway refreshment rooms. The off-licence will be reduced to a combined wine and beer licence. One of the effects of the Bill will be that beerhouses will be abolished all over the country. For this proposition there is great authority. The Committee of 1854 said—

> "The beershop system has proved a failure. It was established under the belief that it would give the public their beer cheap and pure, would dissociate beer drinking from drunkenness, and lead to the establishment throughout the country of a class of house of refreshment altogether free from the disorders supposed to attend exclusively on the sale of spirits. The Committee of the Lords which sat in 1849-50, however, report that of the beerhouses a very large proportion are, as in the case of public houses, the actual property of the brewers, or tied by advances to them, that they are notorious for the sale of an inferior article, that the consumption of ardent spirits has from whatever cause far from diminished, and that the comforts and morals of the poor have been seriously impaired. Much of the evidence before your Committee is to the same effect."

The Committees of the House of Lords in 1849, and of the House of Commons in 1854, reported as to the evil effects of the establishment of beerhouses under the Act of 1830. I do not believe that the evil effects of beerhouses can be controverted, and therefore in my Bill I propose to abolish them. At the same time, the existing owner of a beerhouse will be able to apply to the Licensing Authority for a full licence, and the Authority may grant it if they think fit. I would point out that the whole object of this measure in regard to licences is to raise the character of the public house, and to insure, as far as possible, that the person conducting it shall be a person of capital and respectability, who has everything to lose either by misconduct or excess. I would direct the attention of the House to the operation of Clause 11 in the Bill, which prescribes the necessary rating of the houses for which these licences may be granted, and which will operate to reduce largely the number of licences in the country. I have said that off-licences will be restricted to wine and beer, and I am aware that that proposal will excite opposition. But I must point out that the object of the Bill is to put great difficulties in the way of the consumption of spirits. I do not believe that off-licences have up to now proved so mischievous as is sometimes alleged; I do not believe that the evidence given against them has been satisfactorily substantiated. But this must be realised—that if the House reforms the Licensing Laws in the sense I propose there will probably be at first a great desire and demand on the part of persons accustomed to drink spirits to obtain them, which will be satisfied by the on-licence houses, and in that case there may be a prejudicial effect in the development and increase of off-licences which may go a long way to neutralise any reform which may be made. I was obliged to consider whether we could allow off-licences for the sale of spirits to continue if we suddenly check the sale of spirits in other directions, and I believe it is absolutely necessary in the public interest generally, and I think in the interest of the licensed victualler also, that the sale of spirits under off-licences should be stopped. The Licensing Authority under this Bill is given full power to regulate the hours at which publichouses shall be open both on week-days and on Sundays. The Bill remits that question entirely to the Local Authority, and, generally speaking, I may say that the Licensing Authority of every district will absolutely control all retail sale of alcoholic liquor in the district. There is, however, no standard provided in the Bill, such as in that of Mr. Bruce, as to the number of publichouses in proportion to the population. The operation of Clause 11 will be more effective in this respect than any scale laid down; but what I want to point out is that the policy of the measure is not to interfere with the liberty of the people by the measure itself. The object of the measure is rather to give to the people themselves, through their Representative Body, the power of interfering with their own liberty. I come now to a very important point, perhaps the most important point of all, which is not dealt with in the Bill—I mean the question of compensation for vested interests. My reason for not including in the Bill any provision in regard to compensation is that it would entail taxation in some form or other, and it is not in the power of a private Member of Parliament to propose to the House any taxation of any form or kind. Every such proposal must come from a Minister of the Crown. But I hold that compensation for vested interests is an indispensable accompaniment to any scheme of licensing reform. Any such reform not accompanied by compensation for vested interests would be sheer confiscation and robbery. On this subject perhaps the House will allow me again to recur to the speech of Mr. Bruce in 1871, because he stated the case in a most impartial manner. He said—

> "He could not assent to the proposition of the Member for Carlisle that these houses had no sort of interest. They had an interest, although it was undoubtedly of a qualified description His hon. Friend founded his proposition on the superficial fact that these licences were annually renewed, and that the Justices might any year refuse to renew them; but the fact was that the Justices nearly always renewed these licences unless the holders of them by bad conduct had rendered themselves unfit to hold a licence, and it must be borne in mind that they could not be refused without an appeal to Quarter Sessions, and had anyone ever heard of such an appeal being decided except with reference only to the conduct of the holder of the licence? On the other hand, the House had never recognised any vested interest in this species of property or any right to compensation, yet it had frequently interfered with the trade. It greatly interfered with it when it passed the Beer-house Act; again, when spirit dealers were allowed to have retail licences, and, again, when an Act for closing publichouses was passed, and in 1854 Mr. Villiers's Committee proposed to introduce free trade into the business without providing compensation. The knowledge of the holders of these licences that their right to compensation was of a very qualified character made them extremely anxious for anything like a fair and equitable arrangement of this question."

It has been admitted on both sides of the House that the custom of renewing licences had become so prevalent, so strong, that the licences so issued had become property, and I think that in the discussion of this question the arguments in favour of compensation for vested interests have predominated. And how is it possible to deny the existence of property in these licences, when on every day of the year they are openly bought and sold, sometimes enormous sums of money being given for them? It is impossible to deny the existence of property which passes from hand to hand every day, which is sold, and in which Trustees may invest and do invest; and as such property exists it is impossible to say that Parliament is not bound to give compensation for it, if Parliament deems it necessary to abolish it I come to a much stronger argument even than that. The hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth and his friends refuse to recognise the existence of any property in a licence ; but the State has been much more quicksighted than they, for the State has recognised the existence of a property, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted in answer to a question which I put to him some days ago, because it taxes the goodwill of a public house, both for annual taxation and under the Death Duties. If a man has bought a public house for a sum of money and dies, his outlay on the purchase of that public house will be taken by the Commissioners of Probate as a part of the estate, and Probate Duty will be levied upon it. How can you deny the existence of property which the State recognises for the purpose of taxation? If the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth gives a fair consideration to such arguments, I think he will admit that a property does exist, and that compensation ought to be given to persons who are, for State reasons, summarily deprived of property. I have no doubt that the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he brings on his Licensing Bill will deal more fully and more authoritatively than I have done with this question of compensation. Although I am interested in a reform of the Licensing Laws, and am in favour of a reform of a drastic character, personally I will oppose any measure which, by non-provision for compensation for vested interests, would be an act of confiscation, spoliation, and robbery. I pass rapidly to the conclusion of my remarks. The second part of the Bill relates to the registration of clubs. The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department has written me a letter in which he refers to the opinion of the Chief Commissioner of Police as to the existence in this Metropolis and in many other large towns of bogus clubs, that exist merely for the unlicensed sale of intoxicating liquors; and he expresses his opinion that the formation of those clubs had received a great impetus from the restrictions on the sale of alcoholic liquor. In many cases, the Chief Commissioner observes, these clubs are merely unlicensed taverns, where drinking and gambling is indulged in with impunity. These remarks apply only to the lower order of clubs, though the Chief Commissioner does not recommend legislation which would not apply to all clubs alike. The licensed victuallers complain, and, in my judgment, rightly complain, of the increased drinking in these bogus clubs, which are able to sell liquors at all hours, and which escape altogether the rigid control which applies to public houses. I will not go deeply, at this hour of the evening, into this question of clubs; but I will merely point out that under the provisions of the Bill a *bonâ fide* club would be entitled to be registered by the County Council upon payment of a fee which is graduated according to the rating of the premises of the club. In an ordinary working men's club the fee might amount to 30s. a year, while the great West End clubs of London would have the satisfaction of paying to the County Council sums ranging between £1,000 and £2,000 a year. I have now explained to the House the nature of the measure, and I have given to the House the opinions, which cannot be neglected, of Committees, and also of statesmen—of some who have passed away, and of others who are still in our midst. I claim for the Bill certain merits. It consolidates, simplifies, and amends the law. It is so drawn, that everybody who is at all acquainted with the subject can easily understand it ; and although it consolidates some 20 or 30 Statutes, it is all—with the exception of Part II., dealing with clubs—contained in 16 clauses. I think that, unless I have spoilt my case by over-length in stating it, the House must be of opinion that legislation on this subject is demanded, and legislation without delay. It is quite possible that we may be entering upon a new era of prosperity for trade and industry; but experience tells us that that period will certainly be followed by years of depression. During the period from 1868 to 1874 the people of this country made enormous sums of money and were apparently almost as affluent as one could desire. But if they made a great deal of money an enormous portion of their earnings at that time was expended on alcohol. If there is a good time before us, let us try to do something by legislation to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity, of such a want of thrift as has marked former years of prosperity, and as has increased the difficulties of the recent years of depression. The great poverty and distress in the recent bad times arose to a large extent from the profuse expenditure of money by the people, when times were good, on the consumption of alcohol. Let us give them the opportunity of interfering with themselves, and the liberty of cutting down, if they so desire, the sources of alcoholic supply. Let Parliament perform a duty which it has for, at least, half a century neglected—a duty vividly described in the extracts I have read. I quite recognise that it will not be possible in the present state of public business that a Bill of this kind should be passed into law this year. I do not know whether the details of the measure would be likely to meet with a favourable reception in the House; but, if by any good fortune, the general principles and policy of the measure were favourably considered by the House of Commons, then I would venture to suggest that it might be possible, either by some slight facilities being offered by the Government, or by the general concurrence of the House, to carry the Bill as far as the Second Reading and then to send it upstairs to a Select Committee. The examination of the measure by a Select Committee would be of immense public utility and advantage, and would prepare the way most effectually for Parliament to deal finally with the subject next Session. Whether that be so or not, it is my duty now to express my sincere gratitude to the House for the great favour they have conferred upon me in permitting me to trespass so unduly on their time. And, in conclusion, I earnestly appeal both to the Government and the House to give to the large question I have brought forward their most careful and serious consideration.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend the Law of Licensing, and to provide for the Registration of Clubs in which Intoxicating Liquors are supplied."—(*Lord Randolph Churchill.*)

*(10.50.) **SIR W. LAWSON** (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I think it was Mr. O'Connell who used to say that he went on repeating the same thing over and over again until at last it came to him as an echo from the mouths of his opponents. I was delighted at hearing my noble Friend describe this great evil in the words I have had the honour of describing it for many years past. I congratulate the noble Lord most heartily on having turned his attention to the most important question of the day, and on having made the speech which he has just made. I think the noble Lord is—if he will allow me to say so—a most promising member of the Band of Hope. The noble Lord has secured a good opportunity of bringing the question forward, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech on the Budget 10 days ago, excited attention by his account of the drinking that was going on in the country. Of course, we are told that although there is more money spent on drink there is no proof of increased drunkenness. But I am not concerned to argue that now. I am content to rest on the fact that more money is spent on the consumption of alcohol. The statement has excited such great interest in the country that hardly ever on a private Members' night has there been such a rush to get into the House. Would there have been half as many people to hear about Disestablishment, or Bi-metallism, or Hares and Rabbits, or the Deceased Wife's Sister, or anything of that sort? People have come because they are more interested in this question than in any other question of the day. Someone has sent me a cutting from a paper in 1838, announcing that a firm of colliery proprietors had given notice that they would dismiss all of their men who became teetotallers, because those men were doing an injury to the country. At that time the idea was that it was a pious and patriotic duty to consume intoxicating drinks. It is pretty much the same thing now, in some respects, for no persons are held in

such high estimation as those who make and those who sell these drinks. If a man sells a sufficient quantity of beer he is made a Peer. A Liberal brewer is made a Peer, and then a Tory brewer is made a Peer. Both sides do that, and all are made Peers in their turn. But gradually a sect has arisen which demands that if these drinks are found to be injurious the people should have the power to say, "We will have no licence here." The noble Lord has spoken of the magistrates as being a pure, noble body of men. I am a Magistrate myself, and I know that the noble Lord spoke the truth. The publicans are the picked men of the country; if there is a stain on their moral character they are not allowed to have licences. Everybody, then, has done his best; but, after all, this licensing system is the most miserable, ghastly failure that the history of legislation has ever shown. The noble Lord has spoken of the evils caused by the facilities for obtaining drink, but why should not the public houses do a large business, like other trades? Yet the noble Lord is horrified at the large business done by the public houses. Does not this condemn the whole thing? I have three times carried a Resolution in the House of Commons, declaring that local communities should be entrusted with power to prevent licensed liquor shops being established amongst them, and in 1883 the subject was declared "urgent," but nothing has been done. Two years ago the Government did make an attempt to meet the demand for a reduction of the number of public houses, and the President of the Local Government Board proposed in his Bill to put licensing into the hands of the County Councils. He might have got that through the House, only—and here let the noble Lord take warning—he put compensation into the Bill, and that wrecked the whole thing. Does the noble Lord think that when compensation has wrecked the scheme of a great Government, the same thing in his scheme will help to carry it? The Government proposed to turn a yearly licence into a permanent one, and to put hundreds of millions into the pockets of the publicans and brewers, but the country rose against it, and in a few weeks' time the strongest Government we have had for years—I do not say the best—were obliged to give up their Compensation Clause. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer is now going to recognise by law any value in a licence beyond the value for a year, he will have just as big a hornet's nest about him as there was two years ago. We who have been working in this cause for the best part of our lives have come to the conclusion that the principle of compensation in a licence granted for one year is utterly inadmissible. The people of the country will not stand it—the noble Lord may be sure of that. They will honour and applaud him for the words he has used against the Drink Traffic, but they will not swallow compensation.

*Lord R. CHURCHILL: It depends a good deal on where the compensation comes from.

*Sir W. LAWSON: It must come from public funds. The noble Lord says that "compensation entails taxation," and that taxation is public money. He proposes in his speech to give public money as compensation, and he talks about this compensation being justifiable because the publicans are taxed on their licences.

*Lord R. CHURCHILL: The goodwill of the publican is taxed.

*Sir W. LAWSON: I am only talking about licences. A town clerk who wrote to me the other day has put the matter on a post-card—"Licences for a year, not permanent; value subject to yearly taxation." Let us put a tax on the yearly value, but when that yearly value is taken away we will not tax it. We will not have compensation—we intend to fight against it to the death. The only other thing we want is to carry out the Resolution which has been three times passed by this House, and to give the people power to protect themselves against any Licensing Authority whatever. Surely they have a right to protect themselves. What is this trade as described by the noble Lord? He calls it a "devilish and destructive trade," and surely the people have a right to protect themselves against the devil! I hope the noble Lord will go on in his way nobly as he has begun; but I advise him to get rid of compensation, and then his course will be clear for him. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said in his memorable speech that the state of things is such that the country is bound to interfere. And so it will interfere, and in the way I have described, that is the way on which the people have set their hearts. Do not suppose I am too sanguine. Let me before I conclude, read an extract from words used by the noble Lord himself, and I read these words because I think they afford great encouragement to all prohibitionists in the House and outside—

> "The present House of Commons has only two more years of life before it, and it might come to an end any day. Its successor may be constituted in a widely different manner."

*LORD R. CHURCHILL: What is the hon. Baronet quoting from?

*SIR W. LAWSON: From a periodical called *Short Cuts.* The noble Lord went on to say that every Radical or Liberal supporter of Mr. Gladstone now pledges himself, as a matter of course, to popular control of the liquor traffic, and against compensation to brewers, distillers, and publicans. A few years ago, said the noble Lord, the Members of Parliament bound to such pledges were a mere handful, "in the next Parliament they will comprise the entire Gladstonian Party." The House of Lords will have its hands full of other matters, and will be in no condition to offer resistance to licensing reform. That is a most encouraging statement of the noble Lord, and should send us home to bed in good heart. I conclude by thanking the noble Lord, as I did in the beginning, for what he has done. Let him go on as he has begun, and he will be thanked, not only by me, but by thousands of the poor and distressed in the country, who will pray heartily for his success.

*(11.5.) ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I will not trespass on the time of the House at any length, but I desire to offer a word or two of friendly criticism on the speech of the noble Lord. I take exception to some of the noble Lord's remarks about the Magistrates acting in a haphazard way, and doing nothing to check the issue of licences for years past. I cannot think the noble Lord meant his words to apply as censure to Magistrates of the present day; and, if he did, I presume he must have made the remarks without having made very careful inquiry into the action of Magistrates. As one of that much abused body, one who has taken great interest in the question for many years, and one who has acted as a Licensing Authority, I beg to say the noble Lord is wrong as far as Hampshire is concerned. In that county we have started a policy which is accepted by the trade with beneficial results. We have distinctly laid down that the number of licences in our division is largely in excess of the wants of the population. We have resolved to issue no new licences, and we have given valuable hints to the trade for meeting the wants fo outlying districts, by working the removal clause, and these hints have been acted upon. For years past we have required the trade to surrender two licences for every new one granted for the outlying districts. If the plan were adopted in other parts of the country, by a slow but sure process, the number of public houses would be reduced. In one parish six houses were closed in this way. In Hampshire a very important Committee has been appointed to inquire into the whole system of licensing, and they have agreed upon a Report which is approved by Quarter Sessions. Thus, there will be unity of action in dealing with licences and renewals. The Magistrates for a long time were under the impression that they had no power to refuse renewal, but they are now told by the highest authority—a Court of Appeal—that their powers have not been altered since the old Licensing Act of 1829. If the Magistrates had known their power after the passing of the Act of 1872, depend upon it the Returns to which the noble Lord has referred would have had a very different complexion. It is a misfortune that the Bill of 1872 did not specify in distinct terms that nothing in this Act was intended to detract from the power of the ancient Licensing Authority. Had there been such a clause, the noble Lord would not, in his able speech, have had so much reason to complain of the action of Magistrates. The noble Lord is in favour of popular control. That is the

principle of his Bill. For my own part, I think it the most mischievous form of control which could be devised. That the County Council should have the control is greatly to be deprecated. In Hampshire, since the Isle of Wight was taken away, the County Council is composed of 80 or 85 persons. We have 14 divisions, and, according to the noble Lord's proposal, there will be power to divide the county into areas. I presume Hampshire would be divided into 14, so that there would be barely five County Councillors for each division to adjudicate upon licences as against 14 or 15 Magistrates, and I certainly have much more confidence in a Licensing Authority which is in the habit of dealing with such a question than I have in any body of five Councillors in any part of the country. Let me also point out this objection, that if the Licensing Authority is transferred to County Councils we shall see the trade using its vast power and machinery to the extent that every public house will be turned into a Committee room to promote the return of County Council candidates favourable to the brewing interest. That, I think, is much to be deprecated. The matter requires very careful thinking out before you make a transfer from the old Licensing Authority. We are a much-abused body, but those who abuse us most know least about our discharge of a very disagreeable public duty. The noble Lord says the number of licensed houses is largely in excess of the requirements of the population, and that is true. But, as I have said, we did not know until the decision in the case "Sharp *v.* Wakefield" that we possessed these powers of refusal which now undoubtedly will be used. I would appeal to the Government that in any Bill they may introduce suspending the granting of new licences they will not suspend the power which now exists under the present law of working the removal clause. If the Government can introduce into their Bill a power of demanding two surrenders in all cases for every removal of a licence, I think that a very great improvement will be effected in the course of a few years in the condition of the country. Then we shall not frighten the people by any large schemes of compensation.

(11.15.) Mr. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): During the few years I have sat in this House I have never listened to any speech which gave me more satisfaction than that of the noble Lord. Not that I agree with everything he said, but I recognise that the licensing question is no longer a Party question, confined to the interest of a few Members, and a drastic measure of reform may be said to be within measureable distance. The noble Lord has paid a tribute to the services of Lord Aberdare as Home Secretary, and he attributed the excellence of the proposals in his Bill of 1872 to three or four years experience at the Home Office, but I think this was due to the early training Mr. Bruce had, as a Magistrate, at Merthyr, and among the Welsh coal fields, where he gained knowledge that stood him in good stead, afterwards, at the Home Office. In the matter of off-licences I am glad to hear that the noble Lord proposes to deal with the sale of spirits. I should regret to see the off-licences done away with altogether, because they give women and girls the opportunity of going to a grocer's shop for the dinner beer rather than to a public house. Many of the public houses in London are totally unfit for any decent person to enter by reason of the dissolute persons who congregate therein. I believe, however, that were the proposed power given to the County Councils the elections would be fought very largely on the temperance question. We might, in this way, obtain the services of many men on the Councils who would be very desirable acquisitions for dealing with the temperance question, but, perhaps, not so desirable for dealing with other matters. I also think that, whatever laws we may pass, we should see, as has already been indicated, the public houses used more or less as Committee rooms. I understand that every public house in London is considered to be equal to seven votes. I do not know how far that is true, but if this is the case it shows, at any rate, the great influence of the liquor trade. I believe that the publicans could bring immense pressure to bear on local elections; and, therefore, if the licensing question is to be dealt with by the County Councils, the temperance party will have a very hard fight, and it is very likely will often be defeated in the elections. In my experience as a member of a Licensing Authority I know the influence the trade can bring to bear to produce Petitions in favour of new licences. I know that formerly every application was supported by the churchwardens of the parish. We rather made a joke of this practice, and of late years it has been given up. But I know that persons often sign Petitions in favour of a licence simply to get rid of the persistency of those who collect signatures. I once saw on a Petition the signature of a friend of mine whom I knew as a strong temperance advocate, and when I asked him about it he said, "Oh, I was so pestered about it that I, to get peace and quiet, signed the paper; but I relied upon you to use your influence to prevent the licence being granted." So it would be, I am afraid, with regard to Members of County Councils or Municipal Councils, if they were entrusted with the Licensing Authority. My own view is that the Local Representative Body dealing with licences should be elected for that special purpose, and this election might be held on the same day as the General Council Election, and the objection to multiplying days of election would be met. I have been under the impression that there has been less drunkenness in this country of late years. I see fewer drunken men, and certainly much fewer drunken women; but, unhappily, the quantity of liquor consumed is still very large. I believe that as inducements are offered to the people other than the public house there will be a a change for the better. In the poorer parts of London means of recreation are few, but I am glad to see something is being done by the spread of Free Libraries and Polytechnics. As regards London, the public houses are kept open much too late, the extension of the hour of closing to half-past 12 o'clock being, in my opinion, a criminal blunder which has been productive of an immense amount of mischief. In the Metropolis there ought, I think, to be a graduated system of licensing. Taking premises with a licence of £50 a year, I would reduce the charge to the occupier to £25 a year, on condition that he closed, say at 10; while if he wanted to keep open till 11 or 12, I would make the charge not £50 but £100, or, at all events, enough to make it worth while for the publican to close his house early. In the poorer parts of London there is no reason why the public houses should be open after 10 or half-past 10. I believe there is hardly a working man's club in London that could continue to exist if it were not for the sale of drink, and it will be necessary soon to introduce legislation dealing with that branch of the question.

*(11.26.) Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I congratulate the House that this great subject has been approached in a reasonable and sensible manner. There is a very strong feeling among the London constituencies that there should be some control over the number of public houses, and that in a great part of London especially facilities for drinking are a great deal too numerous. Whether or not it is the case that an increased number of public houses leads to an increase of drinking, those who have to do with the people must know conclusively that it is a slight matter which induces men to go in or not. I am informed that even one or two steps up to a public house will largely influence the trade of that public house. Institutions for thrift, libraries, and recreations of a reasonable character do much to reduce the evil of over-drinking, but still it is obvious something must be done to reduce the number of houses, and the hours also are too long. The noble Lord has described the condition of some public houses he saw in the East End of London, and I may state that I have seen very much the same sort of thing myself. I venture to say that if all the Members of this House went round and saw what was going on in the low-class public houses of this Metropolis, we should very soon pass a new Licensing Bill. As it is, however, no one seems to believe the statements as to what is really going on in these places. Grown up men and women may be considered old enough to look after themselves, but, when you find children of a tender age, say of 9, 10, 11, and 12 years, dragging their drunken parents

away from public houses late at night, the horror of the situation becomes more apparent, and the necessity of doing something to curtail the hours during which drinking is carried on becomes more obvious. If Parliament had ordained that there should be Free Trade in alcohol our responsibility would have been less, but as we have ordained by our legislation upon the subject the hours at which these places may remain open, I think we are bound to consider whether it is right to allow them to continue open until half-past 12 at night, when the great bulk of the people are in bed, and cannot possibly require to make legitimate use of them. With regard to the question of compensation, I was extremely glad to hear the noble Lord say that there is a *bonâ fide* claim for compensation if these places are closed. This seems to me be the crux of the whole question, for I do not see how we can possibly compel the closing of these houses unless compensation is given; but hon. Gentlemen opposite take a different view, and they demand that the houses shall be closed without compensation. We have been considering this matter for the last 20 years, and I have no hesitation in saying that if some agreement had been come to upon the question of compensation a Bill in this direction might have been carried without difficulty. I trust the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir W. Lawson) will take the advice of the noble Lord, and adopt the principle that there should be compensation to a certain extent. I advocate compensation not because I am a friend of any particular class, but because I regard it as the only way in which we can reduce the great evils arising from the superabundance of public houses. The last point I desire to touch upon is the question of working men's clubs. Undoubtedly, a great deal of harm is brought about by these unlicensed public houses. I know of one of them which exists in a certain part of London —not in my own constituency—which receives monthly from one brewer no less than £400 worth of beer per month, or £4,800 worth per annum. That is a very large figure. The worst part of the evil attaching to those houses is that there is no supervision over them, and no limit as to the hours during which they may remain open, Sunday being just the same as week day. On the other hand, their existence is not only unfair to the publican who has to pay Licence Duty, and is under police supervision, but they also tend to encourage the great evil of intemperance, which this House is determined to put down. I must say that I do think we are to be congratulated in the course we now propose to take in this great question. As the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. O. V. Morgan) has stated, this question is now ceasing to be a Party question, and hon. Members on both sides of the House may set to work and do their best to decrease the evils of intemperance by decreasing the temptations which are offered, not only to the poor man, because this is not a poor man's question only, but to people in much higher positions. I sincerely trust we may be able greatly to reduce the evils I have referred to, so that the money which is now spent on drink may be devoted to purposes that will promote the well-being and happiness of the great masses of our people.

(11.38.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): I have waited in hopes of hearing the sentiments of Her Majesty's Government on the interesting question the noble Lord has introduced to the House to-night. From this side of the House the noble Lord can expect nothing but support, for all who sit here are in accord with the principles upon which his Bill is founded. I may say that the great majority of those who belong to the Liberal Party are pledged to the principle of vesting the control of the liquor traffic in the inhabitants. I have heard to-night with no little surprise the panegyric which the hon. and gallant Admiral opposite (Admiral Field) pronounced upon himself and his brother Magistrates in Hampshire. I am in that county, and I have been able to see the effect of their action. The Licensing Returns show that that county presents one of the most unfavourable percentages of any county in England. According to my own observation, living in the midst of a sparsely-populated district, I can say that the proportion the public houses bear to other habitations is one of the most remarkable features of that part of the country. The hon. and gallant Admiral says that the Bench of his county are ignorant of the power they possess to exercise control over public houses. I am surprised to hear that statement. I thought everyone knew that, except the Solicitor General. It is common knowledge up to his time certainly. While I was at the Home Office the Magistrates of Kent came to me and asked me to diminish the number of licences. I looked at them in surprise, and said, "I am astonished at this deputation coming to me, because I have the honour to receive gentlemen who have granted these licences, and who could put an end to them to-morrow if they wished." One of the Magistrates said, "Oh yes, that is perfectly true, but we do not like to take the unpopularity." I said, "Then you have come to ask me to undertake the unpopularity you will not undertake yourselves." To say, therefore, that it is not perfectly well known that the Magistrates have an absolute control over these licences is an assertion that cannot be maintained. Therefore, I felt it necessary rather to comment upon the action of their predecessors on the Bench, and I saw, with great satisfaction, that they passed a Resolution to which, I hope, effect will be given. If that is done there will be a considerable diminution in the number of public houses in England. In my opinion, the principle of popular control is the one that ought to be followed, and the popular areas ought to be very small, so that the authority exercising control will be able to ascertain the wants and wishes of the community. Thus a County Council sitting in a country town would be well able to judge of those wants and wishes. The rest is a matter of detail. The point that is most open to dispute is that which relates to compensation. The noble Lord opposite has been so fortunate, or so skilful, as to omit from his Bill any reference to this great subject of dispute, and has clothed himself in the immunities which are at once the pride and the safety of private Members, by leaving the responsibility of dealing with the question of compensation with the Government. I must say I do not envy the Government such a responsibility. The noble Lord says that this is a question of taxation. I am not going to

enter upon this thorny and vexed question, but I wish the noble Lord had told us a little more of his mind with regard to it. He has not told us whether, in his opinion, the withdrawal of the annual licence is to be regarded as a taking away of a freehold, and compensation given accordingly. Another question I should have liked to have heard the noble Lord's views upon is whether the compensation is to be given to the publican, or to the brewer who has lent the publican money. If compensation is to be given at all, these are matters upon which we ought to make up our minds. With regard to the Bill itself, all I can say is that it is one which I should welcome from any quarter, and I welcome this one all the more because it will be supported with all the ability and authority of the noble Lord. Men of all parties concur in this, that we have to deal with an enormous evil, one which cannot be exaggerated, especially in view of the fact that was brought before us the other night by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the consumption of intoxicating drinks, instead of having diminished, as we hoped that it would have done, has largely increased. I rose from these Benches to declare my concurrence, shared, I am sure, greatly by hon. Gentlemen on this side, in the policy which the noble Lord has happily embraced, and the principle of the Bill which he proposes to introduce.

*(11.48.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am sure, Sir, there is one portion of the observations of the right hon. Gentleman with which we shall all agree, that when this question comes to be dealt with we ought to avoid all Party recrimination, and that in dealing with a matter so vitally affecting the public welfare, all Parties ought to combine to put an end to the evil the existence of which we all so much deplore. When the proposals of the Government on this question are, as I hope they will be this week, laid before the House, I trust that the right hon. Gentleman and his friends will approach their consideration in the spirit which he has indicated, and that they will show a desire to assist the Government in

carrying those proposals into effect. I do not think that I need notice any of the other observations of the right hon. Gentleman, which were rather in the form of inquiries directed to the noble Lord as to the form and scope of his Bill, and I suppose that the best opportunity which the noble Lord will have of clearing up any doubts upon those points will be given him when his Bill is before the House. Whatever may be the difference of opinion in this House upon any of the details of the scheme sketched out by the noble Lord, all Parties will agree with me when I say that we are greatly indebted, and the cause of temperance is greatly indebted, to the noble Lord for the position he has taken up with regard to this extremely difficult subject, and I also think they will agree with me in this, that a more lucid, more full, more complete, and more comprehensive speech has never been made in this House on this subject than that which has been delivered to-night by the noble Lord. He has acquired a remarkable grasp of all the details of this question. My noble Friend has afforded me an opportunity of seeing a draft of the Bill which he proposes to introduce. I can tell the House that, whatever may be thought of some of its provisions, it is a masterpiece of construction, dealing with every possible detail of this complex question, and it is a credit, not only to my noble Friend, but to the gentleman who is responsible for the draft. My noble Friend drew a terrible picture of the evils of drunkenness, which I do not think many of us will consider greatly, if at all, exaggerated. Familiar as I am with a large community in the East End of London, I can say with the utmost confidence that the evils of excessive drinking are at the root of all our crime and pauperism. I can assure my noble Friend that we are as deeply impressed as he can possibly be with the enormity of the evils with which we have to grapple, and that we are as desirous as any one can be of dealing with this great and burning question in a way which will conduce to the general good of the people. The noble Lord compared the period of 30 years ago with the present, both as regards the relative number of public houses and the greatness of the evil with which we have to contend. I think that in the comparison he made between 30 years ago and now he hardly did full justice to what has been done in that time. The effects of the temperance agitation have, I think, been greater than he appears prepared to admit. The results have not been very rapid, but they have certainly been sure. From inquiry and observation I am led to believe that, whether it be true that there is as much drink consumed now as then, there is a smaller amount of drunkenness than 30 years ago, and that we shall see in a progressive degree a still further reduction in the drunkenness of our people, similiar to that which has been witnessed by the force of public opinion in the higher circles of Society. There is a healthy public opinion growing up among the working classes, and the time, I believe, is not far distant when we shall see working men regard their fellows who exceed in this matter with the same abhorrence as that with which similar excesses are regarded in the higher circles. I am not one of those who believe in making people sober by Act of Parliament, but I think that those who desire to see drunkenness reduced may be greatly assisted by legislation. The noble Lord asserted that, though the number of licensed houses has been reduced in recent years, the proportion to the population is still too large. All my Colleagues and I are also of that opinion, and the hon. Baronet (Sir W. Lawson) will remember that when a deputation waited on me with regard to the Local Government Bill, I stated my view to a similar effect then. My noble Friend went on to say that a heavy responsibility rested on us. I do not deny that great responsibility rests on us, as it rested on previous Governments, including that of which the right hon. Gentleman opposite was the Home Secretary. We feel that responsibility, and we have made some attempt to discharge it. This licensing question was one of the important features of the Local Government Bill of 1887, and I am bound to say that the attempt we then made to deal with the subject, and which would have had great and important results, was not fairly dealt with by the Opposition, and not fairly dealt with by the Temperance Party in this House. As the hon. Baronet has referred to this attempted legislation of ours, I may be permitted to take this opportunity of saying a few words as to the nature of our proposal at that time. It was asserted that we were giving the publicans a right in their public houses that they did not possess, and that, in order to purchase out and diminish the number of licences, we were going to make a claim upon the ratepayers to the amount of £200 or £300 for each public house. No such proposal was made by the Government. If any power existed in the Magistrates to refuse to renew licences we expressly preserved that power to them in our Bill. We laid down distinctly that whatever power the justices possess of refusing to renew licences they should still continue to possess. If the Magistrates have the power to refuse to renew licences without compensation, they will be as fully able to refuse those licences without compensation after the passing of our Bill as before it. That was a proposition which was studiously and, in my opinion, deliberately concealed from the people it was desired to influence. All we did was this. We said—

> "We are changing the law, we are creating a new authority, a representative authority to deal with this question, and when the representative authority we create chooses to deal wholesale with the licences in their districts without giving a reason they shall be at liberty to recognise the principle of compensation."

But that was coupled with the express provision to which I have alluded. And, further than that, a very large annual sum was, under our Bill, to be derived from the licence-holders themselves, to be used for the purposes of compensation. That was not proposed as a final proposal, from which we would not recede. It was proposed in the hope and in the belief that the Temperance Party would give us their assistance in dealing with this difficult question, so that it might be discussed in this House in a fair and temperate spirit, with a view to seeing whether we might not together arrive at some plan which would have the result we all desire. But every step we took, every proposal we made, was opposed by the Temperance Party. Every means was taken to prevent even the discussion of the proposal we made, and I, therefore, say that while we recognise our responsibility in this matter, we have endeavoured to discharge that responsibility and shall always endeavour to do so. If responsibility rests with us, there is also a grave responsibility resting with the Temperance Party; and I can only say this, that if the Temperance Party make up their minds to thwart every Government or every Member who proposes to legislate upon this subject with a due regard to the rights of those affected, then a settlement of the question is yet a long way off. My noble Friend who proposes to deal with this question has, I think, rightly and properly placed in the forefront of his proposal the principle of compensation, and he sees and knows that it is impossible for any Government to deal with the question unless the principle is recognised. How compensation is to be paid, what are the principles upon which it is to be dealt with, are, of course, matters for discussion; but I venture to think that most reasonable men in the House of Commons and in the country will recognise that the publican's licence is an interest which is recognised not only by the State, but also day by day in the commercial communities of this country, where licences are bought and sold for large sums of money. When the hon, Baronet says he declines absolutely on behalf of his wing of the Party to recognise any compensation whatever, he says in effect "rather drunkenness than compensation."

*SIR W. LAWSON: Do the public houses mean drunkenness?

*MR. RITCHIE: Unquestionably. We say that the excessive number of public houses promotes drunkenness, and the hon. Baronet agrees with that; but he says, "I will not allow you to disestablish one of these houses if you attempt to pay compensation," and that in effect means, "I will not allow you to do it at all." The hon. Baronet knows perfectly well that there are large numbers of the Temperance Party who do recognise the principle of compensation. I believe the Church of England Temperance Society would not endorse the observations of the hon.

Baronet when he says he declines to recognise any property whatever in licences. I am satisfied that there are large numbers of members of that Society who would altogether repudiate the position the hon. Baronet has taken up. I do not think we can be too particular in making this matter plain. We are all desirous of promoting temperance. We think the number of houses is too great, and that the excessive number promotes drunkenness. The hon. Baronet agrees with that; but he absolutely declines to recognise a principle without the recognition of which, I venture to say, in the minds of nine out of every ten men in this country, the legislation he desires cannot be carried out. At any rate, I think hon. Gentlemen will recognise this—that the time is yet far off—that temperance legislation must be postponed for many years—when the question can be settled on the lines proposed by the hon. Baronet. I think, therefore, I am justified in the observations I have made when I say that the result of the policy of the hon. Baronet is "rather drunkenness than compensation." The hon. Baronet will not even recognise the principle that compensation shall be provided out of the pockets of the people who hold the licences; because he says distinctly that he declines to recognise the principle of paying compensation out of money drawn from taxes on drink or from an increase of the Licence Duty.

*SIR W. LAWSON: I said I considered that the money you raise as taxes is public money, from whatever quarter you raise it, and I object to public money being paid in compensation.

*MR. RITCHIE: That is to say that if this matter can only be settled, as I contend it can only be settled, by recognising that these licences are marketable commodities, treated as such by the State, and by recognising the principle of compensation, the hon. Baronet says, "I would rather have the matter postponed to the Greek Kalends than permit compensation, even if paid out of drink or out of the licences themselves." Now, a few words as to my noble Friend's proposal. He proposes that this matter shall be dealt with by the County Councils and Municipal Councils, and in that I entirely agree with him. They were the bodies which we proposed should deal with this question in the Bill of 1887. The principle of my noble Friend is the principle which the Government are prepared to accept—that is, that the matter shall be dealt with by popular control; but he also proposes a form of control in which I do not gather that he has much confidence himself, namely, control by popular veto.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Why not?

*MR. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman asks, "Why not?" But speaking some years ago as Home Secretary, on the Motion of the hon. Baronet (Sir W. Lawson) proposing Local Option, the right hon. Gentleman took good care to express his entire dissent from the principle of popular veto.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg pardon. I was speaking on that occasion upon the election of bodies *ad hoc*, not upon the question of popular veto.

*MR. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman's speech was made to protect himself against being supposed to assent to the proposal in the speech of the hon. Baronet that this matter should be intrusted to the people of a district. The hon. Baronet made no proposal to elect a body *ad hoc*. I remember quoting the right hon. Gentleman's view as expressed in the speech to which I have referred to a deputation that waited upon me before the introduction of the Local Government Bill, and I am glad to find that I qualified the reference by saying that of course I could not undertake to say that the right hon. Gentleman had not changed his opinion.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am just of the same opinion now.

*MR. RITCHIE: I leave that as it stands. At this hour of the night I do not propose to detain the House by arguing against the question of the popular veto. Does the right hon. Gentleman wish me to argue against it? I do not think it can be necessary, as the right hon. Gentleman is not in favour of it.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am in favour of it.

*Mr. RITCHIE: I do not know where to have the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman is really so rapid in his movements that it is impossible to follow him. So far as popular veto is concerned, I am afraid that if my noble Friend were to adhere to that as a fundamental part of his Bill it would not be possible for me to agree with him. It might be worked in a very arbitrary manner. Under the system of popular veto which he has dealt with to-night I understand that the whole of the public houses in a parish might be closed. What becomes of the compensation there? There would be nothing but the rates to fall back upon. But I have a stronger objection than that. I think it is very desirable that the number of public houses should be reduced; but I am not at all sure whether the sweeping away of public houses altogether would be a beneficial change. It might lead to a reaction, which would do harm rather than good to the temperance cause. Of course, my noble Friend will understand that it is not possible for us to discuss the proposals he has laid before the House in anything like detail. We must wait until we have the Bill before us. Nor do I think he would wish the Government to answer some of the suggestions he has made. He has suggested that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. It is difficult to say absolutely what would be desirable until we see the Bill itself; but I see many difficulties and objections to referring such a great and burning question as this to a Select Committee. It would probably be considered in Committee of the whole House just as fully as if it had never been before the Select Committee at all. I can only assure my noble Friend he may rely upon it that the Bill will receive the most careful consideration of the Government when it is produced; and whether or not we are able to agree with him upon the principle or upon the details of the Bill we warmly and cordially welcome his assistance in dealing with this great and burning question. We believe that, whether the result is the passing of the noble Lord's Bill or some other Bill, he has done to-night a great service to the temperance cause in the able, full, and lucid manner in which he has placed before the House the great evils which attend drunkenness. I cannot but believe that the question of temperance legislation has been greatly advanced by the position which my noble Friend has taken up to-night.

*(12.25.) Mr. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness): I think it necessary that someone connected with the temperance movement should make some reply to what has just fallen from the right hon. Gentleman. He charged us with having represented him two years ago as proposing in the Local Government Bill what would be equivalent to a tax on the ratepayers of £100,000,000 or £200,000,000. What we said was very different from that. We said he wished to confer on the publicans property worth £150,000,000 at least. I, myself, stated that again and again, and I am quite prepared to stand by it. I recollect very well either the *Law Journal* or the *Law Times* stating that the right hon. Gentleman gave a new legal estate to every publican in the United Kingdom. It seems to me a very great pity that a portion of the speech the right hon. Gentleman has delivered to-night was not delivered two years ago on the Second Reading of his Local Government Bill, for it would have saved a good deal of misunderstanding. I understand him to say that if no legal compensation had been due before the passing of the Bill, the Bill would not confer any.

*Mr. RITCHIE: What I said was that in our proposal we expressly reserved all the powers possessed by Justices at the time of the passing of the Bill, and if they possessed the power of refusing to renew licences that power was preserved to them by the Bill.

*MR. CAINE: Yes; but with compensation.

*MR. RITCHIE: No.

*MR. CAINE: Take the well-known case of "Sharp *v.* Wakefield." The magistrates refused to review the sentence, as it is called, for any reasons whatever, except that, in their opinion, it would be better for the district that the licence should be taken away. What I want to know is whether supposing that Bill had become law it would have been competent for any Licensing Authority to take the same course and refuse to renew one or two or a dozen licences without compensation.

*MR. RITCHIE: I will endeavour to explain to the hon. Gentleman that the position of things after the passing of the Act would have been precisely the same as before. It would have been perfectly competent when the publican appeared before the County Council to anyone to object that the licence was unnecessary in the neighbourhood. The County Council would then have referred the matter to the Justices, who would have considered it. They would have had the same power of refusing the renewal as they have now. The applicant would have had the same right of appeal to the Quarter Sessions and the High Court; and if it was decided that the Justices were warranted in refusing the renewal, the publican would have had no more claim to compensation than he has now.

*MR. CAINE: Well, it would have been a very remote opportunity, it is quite certain, after it had gone through all those stages. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman agrees with the noble Lord in his views as to compensation, and it is clear that the compensation proposed is an equitable compensation for a real property. The compensation proposals of the Local Government Bill were quite simple. The difference between the value of the public house as a licensed and an unlicensed house was taken, and a certain number of years' purchase of that difference was given as compensation. It is now proposed that the compensation should be got out of the trade. We have all heard from the right hon. Gentleman that if every licence in any place were taken away by the direct veto there would positively be no one from whom any compensation could be obtained. Supposing there were 2,000 licensed houses in a town, and the Magistrates wished to reduce the number by 250, what would they have to find for compensation? The value of a public house is what it will fetch in the open market. There has been a sale of public houses by Messrs. Peter Walker & Co. in Liverpool lately, and the sum obtained for 250 public houses was about £2,500,000, or £10,000 each. I know the rateable value of these houses. As shops or private houses they would not fetch more than £2,000 each. Well, in a case of this kind it would be impossible for the local magistrates to reduce the number without paying the difference between the value as licensed houses and the ordinary value. The proposal to give compensation to publicans out of the other public houses is absurd. In the Liverpool cases, if the houses I have mentioned were closed by means of the local veto no less a sum than £1,700 apiece would have to be found by the remaining publicans for the purpose of compensation. I wish to tell the House that the Temperance Party as a solid whole are going to resist any proposal for giving compensation for public houses to the bitter end. We are going to have no compromise, and nothing would induce me to vote in this House for a Bill containing such a proposal, or to support it in the country. There is no such thing as renewal of licence; a new licence is granted each year for 12 months. We are to be asked to vote enormous sums of money to compensate a class of men who as a privileged class have been making money by that privilege all along the line.

*LORD R. CHURCHILL: Is the hon. Member aware that the London County Council has been purchasing public house premises in the course of their improvements at the market value, that they do not contemplate using them as public houses, and have put the expenditure or compensation on the rates?

*Mr. CAINE: I do not approve of their doing anything of the kind, but that is altogether apart from the question. I do not desire to occupy the time of the House. I merely wish to make it clear to the Government that whatever proposal they bring forward for compensating publicans will be resisted by the Temperance Party on this side of the House. There are only two ways in which this question can be approached. Either the publicans are entitled to compensation or not. If anybody contends that they are, it means that they are entitled to the full compensation proposed by the Government two years ago. A compassionate allowance is nonsense. They are entitled either to full compensation or nothing. We say they are entitled to nothing, and we shall oppose compensation from the rates or from any other source.

*(12.36.) Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I should like to recommend to the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) an idea which I think has not been put before his mind. It is that the veto ought to be brought down into the smallest possible space. I think it ought to be allowed to the very next neighbour of the publican. We have heard plenty about compensation, but not a word about compensation to those who live on either side of a public house, though their houses are very seriously injured by the public house. In the State of Georgia there is a law in existence by which no publican can obtain a licence without the consent of his 10 nearest neighbours. That law has been in operation for 10 years, and the result is that in only three large cities of the State can any licences be obtained whatever. As we are all great respecters of property, I would suggest

Lord R. Churchill

that those whose property is on either side of a public house are just as much entitled to compensation as the publican himself. There is one other idea I should like to bring forward. I heard it from the late Mr. Thomas Knowles, formerly Member for Wigan. He was a man who had a very open mind, and who studied the interests and circumstances of the class from which he had risen. He told me that over again he has seen men come out of the pit after an exhausting period of eight or nine hours' labour and get drunk on a pint; and he was satisfied that if it had been provided that no publican should be allowed to sell liquor unless he also sold food the men would have had something to eat and would have gone home sober. I would recommend the noble Lord to adopt a provision that no person should be allowed to sell liquor unless he also sold food—unless he was really a victualler—and that publicans should be compelled to provide larger and better rooms for their customers than they now do. When half a dozen or fewer men are in a room together they are all apt to get drunk; but when 50 are assembled in one room they are all banded together to rid themselves of anyone who becomes a nuisance. I thank the noble Lord for having introduced the subject.

(12.42.) Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I do not think I need apologise to the House for saying a few words on this Bill, because a few days ago both English and Scotch Members interfered by their voices and votes in a measure almost of a similar character in which I was interested. I had not the good fortune of being able to listen to the entire speech of the noble Lord, and, therefore, I cannot say whether, when the Bill comes before the House for consideration, I shall support it in all its details or not; but, as far as I have been able to gather from the speech of the noble Lord, there are some principles in it which command my approval and endorsement. First and foremost, I am glad to find that it is proposed to curtail the number of licences, for I have always thought that the unlimited number of licences has led to many evils, among which the sale of adulterated liquor and illegal trading are not the least. Another principle which I shall support in the Bill is that of local veto. I opposed a short time ago a Local Veto Bill, not because I objected to the principle, but because it was proposed to place a power in the hands of the Magistrates in Ireland, to which I object. But the noble Lord has stated that it is his intention to set up a Local Licensing Authority, and this removes the objection I held in the other case. As to compensation, I am quite in accord with the noble Lord, and the reason why the proposals of the hon. Baronet the Member for the Cockermouth Division of Cumberland have met with no favour in this House is that there has always been attached to them, and to the proposals of his Party, the abiding injustice of spoliation and confiscation. I rejoice that the noble Lord has taken the cause of temperance out of the hands of men who are themselves intemperate, in so far as their principles of legislation on the question are concerned. I am glad to find the noble Lord proposing temperance legislation upon the lines of common-sense and statesmanship, upon lines that will secure him the support of many who have hitherto opposed the efforts of the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth and of the hon. Member for South Tyrone.

*LORD R. CHURCHILL: I trust the House will now allow me to bring in the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Sir Algernon Borthwick, and Mr. Johnston.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 242.]

ELECTIONS (SCOTLAND) (CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES) BILL.

On Motion of the Lord Advocate, Bill for the better prevention of Corrupt and Illegal Practices at Elections in Scotland other than Parliamentary Elections, ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General, and Sir Herbert Maxwell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 243.]

GLASGOW LICENSED PREMISES.

Return ordered—

"Of Particulars relating to Premises Licensed for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in the City of Glasgow, stating separately for each of the 16 Wards, in form as follows:—

Address of Premises, Street, and Number.	Name and Address of Factor of Premises.	Name and Address of Owner of Premises.	Name of Holder of Licence.	Annual Rental of Premises.	Population of each Ward.	Number of Licenses per 1,000 of Population.	Number of Licences.		
							Grocer.	Public House.	Hotel.

—(*Mr. Provand.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SALARIED SHOP ASSISTANTS' WEEKLY HALF-HOLIDAY BILL.—(No. 203.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(12.53.) **Dr. TANNER** (Cork, Mid): I regret that the hon. Member should endeavour at this unreasonably late hour to force on this Bill without any explanation of its provisions, or any statement as to the benefits it may be supposed to confer on the people. The hon. Gentleman asked me earlier this evening not to oppose the Second Reading when reached. The hon. Gentleman knows very well he cannot expect very much consideration at our hands, but I will not go into that matter. I desire, however, to explain that the right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock) brought in a Bill dealing with this very question, and that subsequent to the introduction of that measure the hon. Member (Mr. Maple), against whom many grave accusations in connection with sweating in the City of London have been made, introduced his Bill to jockey the measure of the right hon. Baronet. The right hon. Baronet will, perhaps, excuse my speaking in this way. He differs from the Party to which I belong on the question of Home Rule; but I know he is far more competent to deal with this matter than the hon. Member opposite. Certainly, as long as I remain in the House, I shall try to promote fair play between Parties. I beg to move the adjournment of the Debate.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

*__Sir J. LUBBOCK__ (London University): I appeal to the hon. Gentleman to withdraw his Motion and allow the Bill to be read a second time. I do not pretend that I entirely agree with the proposals in the Bill, but I would be glad if the House would send this Bill and also my Bill to a Select Committee. I think we might feel confident that a Committee, after hearing the opinions of the mercantile community, would arrive at a wise decision. I therefore appeal to the hon. Gentleman to withdraw the Motion for the adjournment of the Debate and to allow both Bills to go to a Committee.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): This is a question affecting the commercial community, and I do not think we should be expected to pass the Second Reading without a word of explanation from the Mover. The commercial community of London cannot be regulated by the commercial community of the country, and *vice versâ*. I trust the Motion for adjournment will not be withdrawn, and that if this legislation is brought on it will be at a time when hon. Members can have an opportunity of expressing the opinion of their constituents.

*__Mr. J. E. ELLIS__ (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): We are all aware of the anxious care which the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Lubbock) has given to the subject. But this Bill stands on an entirely different footing to the Bill of the right hon. Baronet, and it seems to me it would be unworthy of the House to pass the Second Reading of such a Bill without the slightest explanation from the Mover.

Mr. BAUMANN (Peckham): I do earnestly hope that both this Bill and that of the right hon. Baronet may be referred to a Select Committee; but if such a proceeding is prevented, I hope the public of London will see that the fault does not rest with the right hon. Baronet or the hon. Member for Dulwich.

Dr. TANNER: I trust the House will excuse my pressing the Motion for adjournment. In a spirit of fair play ——

It being One of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till to-morrow, and Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at One o'clock.

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 30th April, 1890.

Mr. Speaker came into the House shortly after 12 o'clock, and took the Chair immediately after prayers, though at that time there were scarcely half-a-dozen Members in the House. After a wait of about 10 minutes, during which some eight or ten Members more had come in, an hon. Member moved that the House be counted, the two-minute hour-glass was turned down, and the bells were set ringing to call the attention of Members who might be within the precincts of the House to the fact that their presence was required in the House itself. The necessary number of hon. Members having entered, a House was constituted at 25 minutes past 12 o'clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

MARRIAGE WITH A DEACEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—(No. 19.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(12.35.) Mr. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): The Bill which I have the honour to propose to the House this afternoon is a measure to alter and amend the law as to marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and in submitting the measure to the House it will not be necessary to weary it with any long or detailed explanation. The Bill is no stranger to the House; it is rather, if I may be allowed to say so, an old familiar friend, knocking pertinaciously at our doors year after year, and it is received in all parts of the House, except by a small minority, not as a stranger, but as a welcome and honoured guest. The arguments on the subject have been threshed out. The hon. Gentleman who is about to move the rejection of the Bill may have discovered some new ones. If so, I should be delighted to hear them, and I daresay some of my hon. Friends will be able to meet them in the same way in which the arguments against the Bill in the past have been met and answered. This measure has been before the House and the country for something like 50 years. It was introduced in the House of Lords in 1841 by the late Lord Wharncliffe, and since that time the principle has been affirmed in the House of Commons in nearly 80 Divisions, and by large and substantial majorities, obtained not merely when Liberal Governments were in power, but also when Conservative Governments were in Office. During the past 15 years the average majority of the House which has sanctioned the principle has attained the high figure of 60; and during a period of 23 years the Bill has only suffered one reverse in the House of Commons, and this on an exceptional occasion. Not only so, but the Bill has passed in its entirety through all the stages which were necessary in this House, and has been sent up to the House of Lords on seven occasions. The Bill which I now submit to the House is, in its essential features, precisely similar to the measures which have been introduced on so many previous occasions. There is, however, one alteration to which I wish to draw the attention of hon. Members. In Clause 2 it is provided that—

> "No clergyman of the Church of England or minister of the Church of Scotland shall be liable to any prosecution or suit for either performing or refusing to perform such a marriage, and no incumbent shall be at liberty to refuse permission for persons so related, who would otherwise have a right to be married in his church, to be married there by any other clergyman if he himself declines to perform it."

This modification, which is not held by the promoters of the Bill to be essential to it, and which may be rejected in Committee if the House so please, has been made at the request of the clergy themselves. The opposition of the clergy, of which the House has heard so much from the opponents of the Bill, is in the main confined to one section alone, and is not adopted by the whole of the clergy of the Established Church. A large number of clergymen would indeed welcome the passing of this measure; and a very strong feeling is prevalent that when the Bill becomes law there should be no unnecessary distinctions between a marriage of this kind and any other lawful marriage. Therefore, it is in order to carry out the desire of the clergy of the Established Church that the promoters have inserted this proviso in the Bill. In the constituency which

I represent, as in many other agricultural constituencies, the passing of this Bill would be of great importance to the artisans and labourers of the villages. I hold that such a measure would be of the greatest benefit to the poorer classes of the community. When it becomes law, those whose consciences object to such marriages would be in the same position as they are now. Take, for example, the question of celibacy among the clergy. Clergymen are not compelled to marry if their consciences lead them to consider celibacy to be a more fitting state for the priesthood than the married state. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is practically accepted by every other country except this. Its adoption in our colonies and dependencies has been sanctioned by the Imperial Government, and it is reserved for this country alone at the end of the 19th century to maintain this obsolete and antiquated restriction. Any hon. Member who by his voice or by his vote opposes the principle of this measure will be seeking to impose on the majority of the people of this country a vexatious and obsolete custom which has been repudiated by the rest of the civilised world. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Herbert Gardner.*)

*(12.50.) MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to move, as an Amendment, that the Bill be read a second time on this day six months. My contention is that the Bill has no principle whatever to support it. It attempts to take away the rule of Marriage Law which has prevailed in this country for centuries, and it does not attempt to substitute any new fundamental canon. Surely with reference to a law which so deeply affects the welfare of the State, it is at least reasonable that the prohibitions in relation to marriage should rest on some intelligible principle. But this Bill does not attempt to amend the law; it only seeks to mutilate its proportions. It seeks to make a breach in the law, and I think I am not uncharitable in concluding from the public declarations of many hon. Members who support the Bill that when they have once made a breach they will seek to make it wider and wider, they know not how wide, until they shall have broken down the whole superstructure. The supporters of the Bill propose to deal with the dead wife's sister, but not with the dead husband's brother. I want to know on what principle they cast off the prohibition with regard to the woman when they do not cast it off with regard to the man? In short, such a change, once conceded, would set a stone rolling which it would be impossible to stop until it had carried away the whole of the prohibitions resting upon affinity. If those who hold the opposite view had the courage of their opinions they would lead the attack along the whole line; but, as to do so would arouse the feelings of the nation, they think it better strategy to lead a covert attack against an outpost. By this course the opponents of the Bill are placed at a great disadvantage, because they seem to be defending a detail, whereas they are fighting for a principle on which the whole Marriage Law rests. The Marriage Law of all civilised countries from the earliest times has been founded on the prohibitions contained in the 18th chapter of Leviticus. Such was the law in this country in Saxon times, and also in mediæval times till the Reformation; and at the time of the Reformation, by an express enactment, the prohibitions in the 18th chapter of Leviticus were introduced as part of the law. Granting that the Acts of Henry VIII., containing a declaration of the law, were forced upon the Parliament by the Sovereign for private ends of his own, it cannot be denied that successive Parliaments for 350 years have recognised that declaration, and there is a decision of the Court of Queen's Bench in 1847, in "The Queen *v.* Chadwick," declaring that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is against God's law as declared by statute. As to the theological argument, I submit that the prohibitions in Leviticus are not part of the Jewish Ceremonial Law, but are of general application, because they applied to the Canaanites and other heathen nations, who were not subject to the Jewish law; and, further, that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is included in those prohibitions. The prohibition is that a man shall not marry his near of kin,

and instances are given to illustrate the meaning of near of kin. Many of the instances are cases of relations by marriage. There is a distinct declaration that a man's brother's wife is near of kin, and I want to know why the wife's sister is not as near of kin as the brother's wife? I have spoken of the opinion of the Early Church, and it is remarkable that not only did the Early Church declare this opinion by councils, but the Church had sufficient influence to prevail with the later Roman Emperors, with Constantius, and to impress its opinion upon the Civil Law. It has been said, but this was in the days of the decline and fall—yes, the decline and fall of what? Of an Empire which contained within itself every element of permanence, except that strength that morality and religion alone can give. But let me come from ancient days to more modern times, and, first, I allude to that very remarkable declaration of opinion, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, compiled within the precincts of the adjoining Abbey in 1643 by learned religious and earnest men. They gave prolonged consideration to this declaration, which was afterwards ratified and adopted by the Church of Scotland, and since then by the United Presbyterian Church, the Free Church, and by nearly all the Presbyterian churches throughout the world. Upon this subject the document speaks with no uncertain voice in the following terms:—

> "Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred, nearer in blood, than he may of his own; nor the woman of her husband's kindred, nearer in blood than of her own"

I attach great importance to that, because the men who framed that declaration were not men likely to be influenced by Episcopal authority, or by any undue attachment to Ecclesiastical precedent. They were independent men, and we find them declaring an opinion in remarkable conformity with the Early Church. I have been somewhat surprised to hear it said by those who support this innovation that the *Confession of Faith* is losing its hold upon the people of Scotland. I cannot believe it. I think the Scotch people of to-day are as ready as their fathers were to go to the stake in defence of every line of the *Confession*, which they treasure as a most precious heritage. Here I will quote a declaration of opinion from representative men, given with authority, and not as expressions of individual opinion. I have avoided quoting individual authorities, for well we know that there is no heresy that will not find support from some eminent doctor or professor. But I quote this declaration as proof that in modern times the *Confession of Faith* has deep hold upon the Scotch people, and that this particular article is in harmony with the views of all classes of Scotch religious opinion. I refer to the declaration signed, some years ago, by nearly all the leading ministers of Scotland, including ministers of the Scotch Church—the United Presbyterian and the Free Church. Amongst the many names attached to the declaration are the following: Dr. Charles Brown, Dr. Begg, Dr. Robert Buchanan, Dr. John Cairns, Dr. Robert Candlish, Dr. Alexander Duff, Dr. Thomas Guthrie, Dr. Andrew Somerville, and Dr. Andrew Thompson. I hope I may say these are representative names—men, some of them now dead, of great influence in Scotland, and from them we learn what Scotch opinion on this point is. After representing the inconveniences that would arise from a change in the law, they say: "But how, on the other hand, does the case stand as to us, assuredly representing in this matter multitudes over the country who believe these marriages to be forbidden by God in His Word? It is with us no mere matter of 'Church Law,' but an article of our faith. As an article of faith, however, it has, of course, become over and above the law of our churches, which we have no choice but to administer in the way of shutting out from the table of the Lord Jesus those who have entered into these alliances—just as we should still be compelled to shut them out were the civil law changed and the alliances rendered valid as to civil effects." I think that is enough to show that the religious opinion of Scotland is clearly against such a Bill as this. Of course, it is said on this and on all other matters it is open to us to hold our private opinion; but here I should like to quote words used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. He, speaking in this House on May 9, 1855, said—

> "Private opinion may question the authority of the universal voice of Christians on this subject, but it will question it exactly on the same ground that it may question the whole results that Christianity has brought to mankind, and everything that Christianity has elevated out of the region of private opinion."

It is said that because in Catholic countries dispensations are sometimes granted that, therefore, there is no law of the Church forbidding such marriages. I demur, Mr. Speaker, to such an assertion. What does a dispensation prove? What does it mean? It means that in some particular case an exception to the law is allowed. Where it is necessary to have these dispensations, it proves the existence of the law. This is not a Bill dealing with dispensations; it is a question of abolishing the law. Because it seems to be suggested that the law of the Catholic Church does not forbid and annul these marriages, I must quote the opinion of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster expressed in a letter to his Vicar General—

> "The law of the Catholic Church forbids and annuls the marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The law of England on this point is to this moment Catholic, and supports the discipline of the Church. The Holy See can alone dispense in such cases; and it never dispenses except (1) rarely; (2) with reluctance, and (3) for grave reasons and to avoid greater evils. To abolish the law which prohibits such marriages would have the effect of throwing open as lawful to everybody that which in a few rare and exceptional cases is reluctantly given to avoid greater evils."

Now, that does not justify any general relaxation. There might be something to be said if this were a Bill to confer the power of dispensation upon an authority, the head of the State, or upon some other authority. Except Holland and Prussia, I do not know any European country in which such marriages can be solemnised without a dispensation of some kind. It is not, therefore, correct to say that these marriages are allowed by the law of the other countries of Europe. To pass from what I may call the religious aspect of the question, I will put before the House what I conceive to be grave reasons on other grounds. This is not a new question; it has been considered before; it was considered by those eminent jurists who framed the Code Napoléon, and, I think, hon. Members will admit that those who framed the Code Napoléon were not likely to be unduly influenced by any religious scruples. They had had experience, too, of the state of the law under which such marriages were allowed in the early days of the Revolution. You find that during the debate Claude Regnier, Grand Judge and Minister of Justice, affirmed that the permission given by the law of 1792 for the marriage of brothers and sisters-in-law had, as its consequence, brought trouble into families, and was the chief cause of the demands for divorce then before the Courts. Councillor Trouchet declared the prohibition was demanded for the sake of morality, as a safeguard against the dangers arising from familiarity. Councillor Maleville said all the Courts of Justice testified against these marriages. These are the opinions of men of great legal experience engaged in settling a system of jurisprudence; their testimony indicates grave social reasons why a Bill of this kind should not pass. The framers of the Italian Code, one of the most remarkable and the most recent of European Codes, adopted the same principle of prohibition. The late Pacifici-Mazzoni, in his celebrated *Institutes of Italian Civil Law*, says—

> "Lastly, affinity forms an impediment to marriage in the direct line in the same way that legitimate parentela (relationship) does, and in the collateral line in the second degree only, *i.e.*, between cognati (brothers-in-law) and cognate (sisters-in-law) without any distinction as to whether the marriage which produced the affinity still subsists, or has been dissolved by the death of the husband or wife."

Commenting on the statutory prohibitions based on parentela and affinity, Mazzoni says that—

> "The object of them is (leaving out of account the case of ascendants and descendants whose union excites horror) to remove together with the hope of marriage, all incentive to culpable desires and acts between persons living in the closest intimacy and with the fullest liberty under the same roof."

It is on social and not on religious grounds that the Italian jurists maintain the prohibition. It is sometimes said that this law has been passed in America and has not affected the relations of social life. But I point to experience, and I say you find that in America the same results have followed as followed in France under a similar system. In Connecticut, where these marriages are allowed, the ratio of divorce to marriage is in some of the countries as one to seven; in Massachusetts it is as one to 21. How is it possible, with these examples before our eyes, with these startling results, to say there is no argument upon social considerations against this proposed change? Then it is said some of our colonies have adopted it. Well, we had a strange example within the last year of the development of opinion in reference to Divorce Law in Victoria, and it must have shocked many Members. You find in the colony the same result as was found under the French Republic, the same result as in America. Marriage which with us is regarded as a solemn obligation for life has become in Victoria a temporary contract, to be dissolved by three years' absence on either side. Is that a state of things to be regarded without horror; is that an example you are prepared to follow? Do you wish to see the whole Christian law of marriage abrogated? I do not blame Her Majesty's Ministers for not advising Her Majesty to refuse assent to the Bill—if you let water out it must flow on; but I earnestly warn the House against allowing a state of things to be instituted in this country which may lead to results so barbarous. When I heard of the passing of the Victoria Bill it brought to my mind some verses by a poet of the "Anti-Jacobin," familiar I daresay to many Members, in reference to the Marriage Laws of Otaheite, which, as there described, are a little in advance of the law now existing in Victoria. The poet professes cynical regret that we do not in this country enjoy the same liberty as is enjoyed by the inhabitants of the more genial climate of Otaheite—

"Of whist or cribbage mark the amusing game,
The partners changing, but the sport the same;
Yet must one man with one unceasing wife
Play the long rubber of connubial life."

I cannot sit down without saying a word on a remarkable provision in this Bill. It is not only a Bill to render these marriages lawful, but it is in itself a Marriage Bill. It is to marry people who are not husband and wife by the automatic effect of the Bill, when perhaps the man and woman have not seen each other for 30 years. Unless they have separated by formal agreement prior to the passing of the Act, two persons, by the operation of the Act, become man and wife. I cannot conceive anything more monstrous than to make two persons man and wife without their consent simply by passing an Act of Parliament. It is only an example of the difficulties that attend attempts at retrospective legislation of this kind. But it would not satisfy the promoters of the Bill unless its operations were retrospective, for what is the object? I think we all know the object of the Bill; it is to give an indemnity to those who have already broken the law. That is the object, and therefore the retrospective operation. You will find, when you come to consider the details of the Bill, that the difficulties of meddling with the long existing laws of marriage prevent the passing of such a clause as this. These are the reasons I submit to the House in support of my Motion for the rejection of the Bill.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Gainsford Bruce.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*(1.20.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I second this Amendment, not only on religious grounds, but on social and domestic grounds. It was maintained by the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading that the agitation in favour of this Bill came from the working classes, and more especially the agricultural working classes; but that is a statement I beg altogether to deny. I represent an agricultural constituency, and I live among agricultural people, and never, except in one instance, have I been asked by an agricultural labourer to vote in favour of this Bill. Indeed, I think it is well-known that such agitation as there is in favour of the Bill comes from a small circle among the highest class in the land, and I think it is pretty well-known that the agitation is kept up by subscriptions from

rich men who pay a certain class of people who go round and obtain signatures to Petitions in favour of the Bill. Every Member of the House knows it is easy, if the means are provided, to get up Petitions—not that I have ever tried it myself. I believe the custom is to pay a certain number of people to travel about with Petitions and tout for signatures. With a little trouble and expense very large Petitions may be got up. I have heard of one gentleman who has expended some thousands of pounds in this way and in favour of this Bill. Then, also, let me remind hon. Members that the few people who have married, or wished to marry, their deceased wife's sister feel aggrieved at the state of the law and are active in promoting this Bill. But against these few there are thousands who are perfectly satisfied with the present state of the law, yet take no trouble to get up counter Petitions. Therefore, there are Members who take but a luke-warm interest in the subject, but who have yielded to the persistency of a few among their constituents, and have voted for the Bill not because they believe in it, but with the comforting assurance that it is sure to be thrown out by the House of Lords. I have not the slightest doubt that many Members have voted for the Bill, and, at the same time, thanked God we have a House of Lords. Should the Bill pass, I cannot see how the line of demarcation can be drawn at the deceased wife's sister; it must inevitably lead to intermarriage between all who are not blood relations. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading asks, how is it possible for a deceased wife's sister to undertake the care of the children of her deceased sister? There is no doubt in many cases she is the natural guardian of the children, and there is not now, as the law stands, the slightest impropriety in her acting as such under her brother-in-law's roof. I have known many such instances. Reference is frequently made to our colonies; but I say, if it is desirable there should be uniformity in the Marriage Laws, then let the colonies conform to our laws. We are not called upon to follow the lead of our colonies in this respect any more than we are to imitate them in their protective legislation. There is, moreover, a great distinction in the social conditions here and in the colonies. In the sparse and scattered populations of our colonies the males are in a large majority; but here, according to the last Census, the women are a million in excess of the male population. A large number of women remain unmarried, and it is natural that they should, in the relationship of brother and sister, occasionally find a home in their brother-in-law's house, and take care of his children. The conditions of life in the colonies are wholly different. Brother-in-law and sister-in-law are often comparative strangers; and, whatever reasons may exist for such a law in the colonies, they certainly do not apply here. I earnestly hope the House will not assent to the Second Reading. No necessity exists for any such change in our Marriage Laws which have worked so well and for so long—a change which is fraught with danger and disaster to the whole of our social and domestic life.

*(1.30.) MR. A. CAMERON CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston): I think the hon. Member's attempt to show that marriages such as are authorised by this Bill are against the ruling of Scripture was not very successful, and the very enumeration of the large number of cases in which marriage was forbidden makes the omission of this particular relationship the more striking; while the fact that there is a text specially preventing marriages of this sort during the lifetime of the wife showed that marriage with a deceased wife's sister was permitted. It appears to me strange that, upon the ground that the majority of the members of the Church of England accept a special interpretation of the Scriptures, all sections of the community should be bound by it. Allusion has been made by the hon. Member to the *Westminster Confession of Faith;* but that document has in many points become out of date, and if a new confession were written now the declaration it contained on this subject would certainly not find a place in it. The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland has appealed to its individual presbyteries, and a great majority of those presbyteries have declared in favour of the alteration of the law which this Bill seeks to bring about. The Convention

of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs of Scotland has for the 16th time reported with absolute unanimity in favour of the proposal. 300 or 400 Presbyterian ministers have signed Petitions in favour of the Bill; and in Glasgow, in the short space of two weeks, it was found possible to get no fewer than 45,000 signatures to another Petition. The Presbyterian Church in America and in Canada have also, in the fullest manner, accepted the principle of this Bill. When the hon. Member who seconded the opposition to the Bill was dealing with the social advantages which, he says, arises from the present state of the law, I was rather puzzled to know how he could apply his remarks and arguments to the poorer populations. He told us that the movement was mainly supported by wealthy people, who paid large sums of money in order to get up Petitions in its favour; but surely if the movement was so supported the powerful association which exists for opposing the Bill would have been equally effective in getting up Petitions on their side, if they had the same amount of public opinion in their favour. The hon. Member also alluded to the fact that the deceased wife's sister frequently took charge of the children, and that it would be difficult for her to do so if the Bill were passed. But in advancing that argument did the hon. Member bear in mind the small size of the houses occupied by the greater part of the population? In Glasgow, for example, a quarter of the families live in one-roomed houses, and the majority of the remainder live in two-roomed houses. I do trust that this House will again affirm that the social argument used on behalf of the rich shall not be allowed to stand in the way of reasonable rights being extended to the poorer portion of the community, for whom a Bill of this kind is so much required.

*(1.40.) Sir JOHN PULESTON (Devonport): I feel compelled to enter my protest against many of the arguments which have been adduced by my hon. Friend who has seconded the opposition to the Bill. My hon. Friend says that the measure is promoted by the richer classes, and he argued that because rich men contributed to the promotion of the movement, therefore there is no genuine demand for an alteration of the law. But surely the hon. Member knows that someone must always contribute towards the expenses of carrying on any reasonable agitation, and because those contributions are not always forthcoming from the poorer classes it by no means follows that the demand for alteration in the law is not legitimate. I think that if my hon. Friend went more fully into the subject he would find that the poor classes as well as the rich are anxious for this reform. I have paid some attention to this matter for a good many years, and have come to the conclusion that a large body of the working men of the country who cannot themselves afford to subscribe funds for this reform believe that it is essential and desirable that it should be carried. I do not believe that the marriages which the Bill sanction will be multiplied in any marked degree by reason of the passing of the measure; and, taking into consideration the fact that the colonies have passed laws which have been sanctioned by the Queen in Council allowing these marriages to take place, I think it is only right that similar legislation should prevail in this country. But I do not ask, however, that the Bill shall be carried simply because the colonies have adopted a similar measure. My hon. Friend has referred to the question of personal hardship upon British subjects all over the world, and has, of course, admitted that although these marriages are legal in the colonies the children of such marriages when they come to this country are declared by the law to be illegitimate. My hon. Friend has referred also to the question of Petitions. He said they were paid for by the yard. I have had something to do with presenting Petitions on the subject to the House of Commons, and I venture to say that I have never during all the years I have been in the House presented Petitions of so genuine a character, and with so much feeling behind them, as the Petitions I have presented in favour of this Bill. I was, indeed, rather shocked to hear my hon. Friend making those observations. He made also a serious charge against Members of this House. He said that many hon. Members voted for the Bill against their convictions, feeling

thankful that there is a House of Lords to throw it out. My estimate of hon. Members of this House is not so low as that. I believe that there never has been a more genuine majority in support of any Bill brought forward in this House. My hon. Friend has referred to the question of blood relationship. I think that in this enlightened period—this latter end of the 19th century—the less our opponents have to say on that subject the better it will be for them. We know that no blood relationship can be closer than that between first cousins, excepting, of course, the relationship between brother and sister; and yet we are well aware that marriages between first cousins are of constant occurrence. We know, further, that there is no actual blood relationship between a man and his deceased wife's sister. I am not, I repeat, arguing in favour of this measure solely because it has been passed by the colonies. They have passed the law, and have done so with the full knowledge of what they are doing, because they saw in it, as we see in it, a great principle; and the fact that the principle has been recognised by so many Legislatures proves that there is a very strong demand for a reform of this character. I hope the House will, by a very much larger majority than usual, accept the Second Reading of this Bill. I have every possible appreciation of the honesty of the convictions of those who are opposed to it. I do not charge them, as an hon. Member has attempted to charge its supporters, with being animated by convictions entirely at variance with their votes. I give them credit for having strong opinions on the subject. I believe, however, that they are wrong, and that they are acting in the interests of a small minority of the people; whereas those who are supporting the Second Reading are acting in the interests of all classes of the community.

(1.50.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I am not a very likely person to say at any time, "Thank God we have a House of Lords," but I do trust that as long as the House of Lords continues to exist it will prevent the passing of such legislation as this. I have always voted against the measure, and I shall continue to do so, because I believe that by adopting it we should be taking one step forward in that anti-Christian, anti-social revolution which is making such insidious advances throughout Europe, and manifestations of which are plainly written on the face of Europe at the present time. At the same time, I cannot say I am willing to associate myself with all the arguments which have been adduced against the Bill. The reference, for instance, to the Divorce Laws of Henry VIII. and his servile Parliament are scarcely worthy of consideration by anyone who recollects what that gentleman's matrimonial relations were. Again, as to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, hon. Members will remember that it was drawn up in the days of the Vicar of Bray, a gentleman who said one thing when one Government came in, and another when another Government came in. The grounds upon which I oppose the measure are the grounds which have been accepted by Christendom from its beginning. As soon as the Christian authority was recognised it became a social law that the relations between a man and his wife's sister should be regarded as identically the same as his relations with his own sister. After the days of Julian the Apostate the Emperor Valentinian enlarged the Code so as to prohibit marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and afterwards Theodosius in the West and Arcadius in the East extended the prohibition to the whole Empire, and from that time the prohibition has been enforced. I have sometimes been met with the challenge that many of the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, of which I am a member, are in favour of the present measure. Well, it is true that some Catholic Bishops have, in more or less explicit terms, expressed themselves in favour of some such proposal, but is the reason which influences these Bishops a reason which ought to influence us? Ask those very Bishops who are in favour of the removal of the civil disabilities attending marriage with a deceased wife's sister whether they are also in favour of the removal of the ecclesiastical disabilities, and the reply will be in the negative. If the civil disabilities are removed, the Bishops and Authorities of the Catholic Church will still maintain their ecclesiastical canons and rules precisely as they stand at present. Why? Because the considerations and reasons which have swayed the authorities of the Roman Empire and the Christian Church for at least 1,500 years are just as strong in their operation as ever they were. Unless we allow to the agnates of a man the same freedom in domestic relations as is enjoyed by the cognates, we shall embarrass all family life, and family life is the foundation of Christian and social order. If you attack the family life you attack the whole social order, Christian and natural, and it is because this proposal is an attack upon the integrity and freedom of family relationship that it is important in the interests of social and Christian order to resist it to the utmost. As to the hardships which it is said this measure would prevent, are there not other means by which they can be prevented? We are told that the colonies have passed measures which are absolutely at variance with the law of this country. That difficulty can easily be got over. There is such a principle as the *lex loci contractus*, and if Parliament is desirous of removing the anomaly of one law prevailing in the colonies and another law prevailing in this country, let it provide that the law of a colony shall, in matrimonial matters, be recognised as valid here in the interests of those married in the colony. Then it is said that difficulties arise in connection with the devolution of property, but those difficulties can be obviated under the existing law, for a father whose children are by the law illegitimate can provide for the descent of his property to them by naming them individually in his will. Then, why should not Parliament introduce a dispensing power, to be applied to cases with respect to which such power might reasonably be exercised? Looking at the general question, I consider this proposal to be an insidious and most dangerous attack upon that which constitutes the essential unit of Christian and civilised society, namely, the family life, and, as such, I shall oppose it. (2.0.)

(2.18.) MR. A. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): Sir, several speakers have referred to this subject as a very old one. Unfortunately it is true that the question is a very old one. Year after year for the last 50 years the people have declared that marriages such as these which we are now discussing ought to be made legitimate. We have heard a good deal as to the law in other countries than this. We have been referred to the Ecclesiastical Councils and to the Early Ages, but we have not heard from the beginning of the Debate until this moment a single reference to the modern law of England which forbids these marriages. The law which makes void the marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister is not a law which depends for its sanction upon the views taken by the Councils of the Church in the fourth or later centuries. It does not depend upon the views of learned doctors in modern times. It depends simply and solely upon the Act passed in 1835, which makes these marriages void and illegal. But up to the passing of that Act these marriages were not void and the children were not illegitimate. These marriages were what is known as "voidable." That is to say, unless someone chose to raise a suit in the Ecclesiastical Courts to set aside the marriage it remained a perfectly valid one, the children remained perfectly legitimate; and if one of the parties died before any such proceedings were taken the marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister was as good by the law of England as any other marriage in this Kingdom. The hon. Member (Mr. Bruce) referred to the Councils of the Church, and to the opinions of learned Judges, but he did not refer to the Act of Parliament by which these marriages are made illegal, and by which the children of such marriages are bastardised.

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: These marriages were always illegal, though, no doubt, if one of the parties died before proceedings were taken, they could not afterwards be set aside. Never, in any period of our law, were these marriages legal.

MR. A. ELLIOT: Here is the Act of Parliament, which no one can dispute—the Act known as Lord Lyndhurst's Act, and it was introduced, I believe, to favour persons who contracted marriages of this kind. If these marriages were immoral, why, in the name of common sense, did the House of Commons, supported by the full Bench of Bishops, enact that all such marriages previously contracted were absolutely legal and good, and the children legitimate?

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: I can hardly assent to that. These marriages were always illegal. There never was a period when they were legal. There was nothing to prevent proceedings for incest.

MR. A. ELLIOT: Did the hon. and learned Gentleman ever hear of such a thing as a prosecution for incest? Does the hon. and learned Gentleman think he can find in any text book of the English law a single authority in favour of an indictment for incest, in relation to a connection of this character? Such a thing does not exist in the law of England. It is merely a question of moral connection, but in Scotland the law is slightly different. It might be that prosecutions might take place in Scotland, under certain circumstances, on the ground of incest. But I should like to hear my hon. and learned Friend say whether, from the day he was called to the English Bar, he has ever had brought to his practical knowledge a case of incest? I repeat, that up to the time of the Statute of 1835, these marriages were legal to this extent, that the children were legitimate, unless proceedings were taken to set their legitimacy aside. It was very rarely that such proceedings were taken. The marriages were voidable, but were not necessarily void. Nobody could upset them in the Ecclesiastical Courts, or elsewhere, except proceedings were taken during the period I have mentioned. It is strange that those who oppose this Bill make no reference to the Act of 1835. There was a Royal Commission which sat upon this question, and the President of that Commission was the Bishop of Lichfield. That Commission, after having carefully examined the whole case, reported that the Act was operating badly, and was tending to immorality; and, further, they

put before Parliament and the country their opinion that the Act ought not to be continued. When my hon. and learned Friend talked about the respect we all owe to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, I think he ought to have somewhat refreshed his recollection with regard to the details of that creed, because in the very chapter which forbids these marriages of affinity, as well as of consanguinity, the *Confession of Faith* declares in the strongest terms against marriages with infidels, with Papists, and with other idolators. Is my hon. Friend prepared to abide by every line of this *Confession of Faith*, and, if necessary, to go to the stake to render illegitimate and void marriages between members of the Scottish Church and Infidels, Papists, and other idolators? It is useless to suppose that we should take, line by line, the articles of creeds drawn up centuries ago as if every word of those articles was of Divine inspiration. I should like to point out to my hon. and learned Friend that the position of the *Confession of Faith* is the position of a creed which has been ratified by Act of Parliament. My hon. Friend nods his head to that statement, which, indeed, cannot be denied. But what does the ratification of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* amount to? It amounts to this, that the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland and kindred Churches, but it does not render the law of the land for every purpose affirmed. This is a point of some importance, and I must cite upon it the opinion of a great authority, Lord Fraser, before he became Lord Fraser. This is what he says—

> "The ratification of the *Confession of Faith* does not make everything set forth in that book the law of the land. It amounts to no more than this, that the Confession is the Confession of the Established Church of Scotland, and I adopt the view expressed by Lord Advocate Rutherford, on the 1st of March, 1848, given to the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the state and operation of the law of marriage, whose Report was presented in that year to Parliament, that the ratification of the *Confession of Faith* cannot be held to constitute a legislative construction of the statutes which regulate this subject, namely, the Acts 1567, cap. 14, and 1567, cap. 15."

This very eminent lawyer gave his own opinion as follows:—

> "'I think it right to add that I am in the knowledge of this; that it has been the opinion of some very eminent lawyers in Scotland that the marriage is a good marriage; that the issue of the marriage, of course, would be legitimate; and that all the regular consequences would follow from that marriage that follow from a regular marriage; and in so far as I have been able to form a judgment, although I stand very much shaken, and am placed in great doubt, from the weight of the Institutional Authorities against me, I am rather inclined to think that that marriage would be a lawful marriage, and have all the consequences of a lawful marriage.'—(Report of Royal Commissioners, p. 101.) I concur in this opinion."

There can be no doubt that the law of 1835 in England has not operated well from a moral point of view, and that, so far as the law of Scotland is concerned, according to the best authorities at the present time, there is some doubt as to how the law really stands. Reference is made to other countries. The Roman Catholic Church—however little many of us may concur in its principles and practices—embraces, I presume, the vast majority of the Christian nations of the world. Well, amongst the Roman Catholics, for ages, it has happened that these marriages have been allowed. According to the Roman Catholics it is not contrary to Divine law that these marriages should be contracted. It is contrary to the law of the Church. I am almost afraid to tread on such foreign territory as the law which governs and regulates the Roman Catholic Church; but I confess I have always believed that what is considered to be absolutely the Divine law—the law of God—cannot be dispensed even by the Pope himself, and that what can be dispensed are the regulations and discipline of the Church, a very different matter. I have always understood that in the Roman Catholic Church nothing can be dispensed which is found laid down in black and white in the Scriptures, but that in matters of discipline, such as the prohibition of marriage with a deceased wife's sister, dispensations are granted from day to day. I say, therefore, that we could not have a stronger proof that among this large body of Christians the prohibition of these marriages is not regarded as a prohibition founded on the word of God, but is regarded only as an ecclesiastical rule or law; no doubt a law of great authority, but one which, having been made by the Church, may be dispensed with by the Church. Surely it is too much that, after all this, the argument should be brought forward by my hon. and learned Friend, with great zeal and genuineness, that we are outraging the commonest sentiments of Christianity in proposing these marriages. We are doing nothing of the sort. We are proposing to make legitimate, by the law of England, marriages which are legitimated every day in Roman Catholic countries, by virtue of the Papal dispensation. It is far from my wish to speak disrespectfully of the Papal dispensation, but surely if the Papal dispensation can make the relations between a man and a woman perfectly moral, an Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom can do no less. I do not know that I look on this question in precisely the same way as many hon. Gentlemen in this House, but it does not come well from them to tell us that we are legitimating an immoral connection when those they most respect are legitimating and validating it every day. What have been the fruits of the law of 1835 in England? Ten or 12 years after it was passed the Royal Commission reported that it was working badly and acting in the direction of immorality. Surely, that is important, and it behoves those who take an opposite view to show that the Commissioners were mistaken. The opponents of the Bill are unable to point to a single verse of Scripture which is directly antagonistic to these marriages. The words in Leviticus, which they rely upon, have reference to marriages of another kind, and I say, therefore, that we should deal with this matter practically and in accordance with the wants of the present day. I know it is easy to cite opinions in Scotland of some years ago against these marriages. It was for a long time supposed that they were forbidden by the Divine law in express terms, and, of course, if that was so, neither the Pope of Rome nor anyone else could abrogate the law. If the law is abrogated it is a sign that the law is founded upon other than Divine authority. In Scotland I maintain that there has been a growing feeling in favour of this Bill. Every year you find fewer and fewer persons who are against it. I can cite on this point no less an authority than Principal Rainey, who declares that he is strongly opposed to measures of this kind and regrets the backsliding of many of his Colleagues who take a different view from himself. The question has now been discussed for 63 years, and we think it is high time to put an end to it. The Bill has, almost without exception, been supported by majorities in this House, whichever Party has happened to be in power. If people want to contract these marriages I think we can show no prohibition against it, and I think we ought to have regard to the Report of the Commissioners, who say it would be to the advantage of morality in this country if such marriages were legalised.

*(2.42.) Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): I am afraid that, notwithstanding the seductive arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite, I must give to this Bill the same opposition as I have given to it for years past, and as I suppose I must say I hope to give to it for many years to come. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down referred to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, but did not quite accurately quote it. He stated that marriages with infidels and Papists are placed on the same level as marriages within the prohibited degrees.

Mr. A. ELLIOT: It was in reference to a remark that was made about not going to the State. I said every line of the *Confession of Faith* implied going to the State.

*Mr. J. G. TALBOT: I only want to draw attention to the fact that the *Confession* says that marriages between the prohibited degrees are such, as cannot, under any circumstances, be made lawful, whilst the others are only discouraged. The real gist of our opposition to this Bill is that these marriages between the prohibited degrees of affinity have always, up to recent times, been regarded by the universal consent of Christendom in the same light as marriages within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. The hon. Member has referred to the Papal dispensation, but he must remember that that dispensation is also given in the case of marriages within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. I am sorry to say that recently, in a very notable case, a dispensation was given to a marriage between an uncle and his niece. Of course, I have nothing to do with the way in which the Roman Catholics settle these matters among themselves, but I must point out that the argument which the hon. Gentleman bases on the Papal dispensation will lead him much further than I think he wishes to go. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading called the Bill a honoured guest. I should have thought that, after being so often submitted to the House, the measure might have had a little honourable repose. He says the principle of the Bill has been affirmed in 80 Divisions. I think that, in order to make up that number, he has included Divisions in Committee on the clauses.

Mr. H. GARDNER: I said Divisions on principle.

*Mr. J. G. TALBOT: The hon. Gentleman made a still more striking statement. He said a large number of the clergy of the Church of England desired to see this measure passed into law. I am unable to admit the accuracy of that statement. Again, with regard to the assertion of my hon. Friend the Member for Devonport (Sir J. Puleston) that this is a poor man's question, that is a point in regard to which I have the most profound scepticism. The late Lord Hatherley took pains to make an investigation among the working classes in the City of Westminster on this question, and the result was that there was not the slightest demand on their part for the passing of such a measure. Then my hon. Friend the Member for Devonport argues in favour of the Bill on what he calls the highest grounds of principle. That is a very grandiloquent statement, but, in my opinion, the supporters of the measure have not got a shred of principle amongst them. They have not the courage of their convictions. The Bill, if passed, would unsettle the whole of our Marriage Laws. If once it were carried, there is no limit to the distance we must be prepared to go. We must sweep away all the degrees of affinity, and afterwards the degrees of consanguinity. In other countries where this change has taken place that has been the result. Lord Cairns, speaking in the House of Lords on the Marriage Laws in the United States, said a man might there marry a mother and her daughter one after the other. He went on to say that Americans would tell us that conjugal infidelity was unknown among them, but the fact was that the conjugal vow was never broken, because if it ever became irksome there was no difficulty in getting rid of it altogether. I must say a few words on the terms of the Bill itself. The 1st clause says that a marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister shall not be void

> "Unless either of the parties has married some other person before the passing of this Act, or the parties have been separated by decree, or have agreed in writing to separate, and have thenceforth lived separate until the passing of this Act or the death of one of them."

I do not see why subsequent misconduct should nullify a previous marriage, if it is to be considered a marriage at all. The 2nd section contains the strange provision of which the hon. Member made so much. It provides that no clergyman of the Church of England, or minister of the Church of Scotland, shall be liable to any prosecution or suit for either performing, or refusing to perform, such a marriage, and it proceeds to enact that no incumbent shall be at liberty to refuse permission for persons so related, who would otherwise have a right to be married in his church, to be married there by any other clergyman if he himself declines to perform it. A more strange concession, or a more deliberate affront to the religious convictions of the clergy, I cannot imagine. If this Bill has any principle at all it must mean that the relatives of the wife are in law no relatives whatever of the husband. Hon. Members who support the Bill neither have the courage of their own convictions nor appreciate the real grounds of the opposition to the measure. The conviction that underlies our opposition to this Bill is this, that the marriage law is one consistent whole, and that upon that marriage law, as upon one great pillar and foundation, social life exists. When you weaken that foundation you weaken that upon which social life is built up. We take it on the ground of the universal consent of Christendom, and upon the teaching of the great Founder of our religion, that man and wife are one flesh. Upon that basis we believe society to be formed. If you weaken that foundation, if you take away the props by which the Marriage Law of Christendom is supported, there is no knowing what will follow. Where countries have departed from these universal doctrines of Christendom they have gone on from one change to another. In the last few weeks we have had a lamentable example of how, when you once begin to tamper with these foundations, the whole fabric shows signs of tottering. One of our own colonies, having first interfered with the Marriage Law, has now altered the Law of Divorce. I must apologise to the House for having detained it so long on a matter which is worn threadbare. It is a question, however, on which I have strong convictions, and I trust the House will never consent to the passing of the Bill.

*(3.4.) MR. T. FRY (Darlington): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has certainly the courage of his convictions, for year after year he has endeavoured to impress his views on us in the most consistent manner. If, as he says, the social fabric of our society is to stand on this law, it certainly is in a very weak and precarious condition, but I have no doubt that in his inmost heart he does not believe that the great social fabric will totter to its foundations if a change is made in a law which has only been in existence in its present form since 1835. The other day a very respectable woman wrote to me as to her projected marriage with her deceased husband's brother. Of course, I had to write and explain the law to her, but a ceremony of marriage was gone through between them, and they are now living together. The fact of the law being as it is does not really prevent these marriages taking place. People either contract in other countries marriages which are not legal here, or they live together without going through any marriage ceremony whatever; and I think when we consider the result

of things of this kind upon the children in after life we ought to do our best to remove the stigma which now attaches to them. An hon. Gentleman opposite spoke of Leviticus. If there is one chapter of the Book of Leviticus so binding upon us socially, surely all the other chapters are also. I would like to ask the hon. Member why he does not keep the seventh day of the week as a day of rest, and whether he would approve of a person being stoned to death for picking up sticks on that day? With the law in its present state, great difficulty sometimes arises from the fact that the legal enactments of almost all our colonies on this point differ from our own. About two years ago there was an account in all the newspapers of a man coming to this country after having married his deceased wife's sister in one of the Australian colonies. He brought his wife home with him, but, being somewhat fickle, he repudiated her and married again. Just see the anomaly. If that man were to go back to Australia, the wife he married in the colonies would be his legal wife, and the second marriage would be illegal. In this country, on the other hand, the second is the legal wife, while the first is not married at all. It seems to me to show there is something anomalous and wrong in our Parliamentary system when the Representatives of the people have to pass this Bill time after time, but cannot succeed in making it the law of the land, because a comparatively small number of persons are placing themselves in the way of the proposed change. It is said that, if the Bill passes, other great alterations will be made in the Marriage Law—in other words, if we do right, evil consequences will follow. To my mind we ought to do what is right and to set aside all unworthy fears as to the consequences of our action.

*(3.9.) MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): Those who oppose this Bill feel that, as far as it goes, it will undermine to a certain extent the social fabric, and will do much to injure domestic peace. The hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has referred to hard cases. I would remind him that hard cases make bad law. When he refers to the difficulty of the Australian who has married his wife's sister and returns to this country, and finds she is no longer his wife, I would point out to him that the same difficulty occurs to the wife of the Shah of Persia, when she happens to be travelling in this country. The retrospective clauses of this Bill would, however, in the case he has cited, endow his Australian friend with two wives—and I leave him to solve the problems of legitimacy between the two wives and the two families. The constituencies do not care much about this Bill, or we should have had a larger House to-day, and we who oppose the measure would not have been compelled to rush into the House in order to make a quorum. In the last debate on this subject it was said to be all humbug to declare that the working men are in favour of this Bill, and I believe that to be perfectly true. The measure is pressed forward by a small number of people who are what is called respectable, and it is a delusion to parade the interests of the working man as involved in a change of the Marriage Law. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading did not take the trouble to adduce any arguments in support of it, and said the arguments against the change were all old. To my mind old arguments, until they have been answered, are much better than new ones. The hon. Member fell back on the assertion that he had a pocketful of letters, which he did not read. I expect that most of those letters are written by persons who are interested in the matter—persons who have already broken the law, or who want to be relieved of the effects of their violation of it. Whenever I receive letters of that sort I always write back to my correspondent and say, "The fact of your being anxious to see the Bill passed because you have broken the law is the strongest argument that could be brought forward against the measure." The hon. Member has referred us to former Debates. Let me recall some of the arguments. Lord Palmerston, who always voted for this Bill, was in the habit of giving two reasons. Though Lord Palmerston could not be called a theologian, he probably expressed the average opinion of the Liberal Party. His favourite argument was that every facility should be given to every man to

escape having more than one mother-in-law, and the other was that every man should marry according to his own taste, and he did not see why a man should not marry his own grandmother. The present leader of the Opposition (Mr. Gladstone) has also spoken on the subject, and his speech, uttered many years ago, and never withdrawn or explained away, contains a perfect *répertoire* of the arguments that can be used against the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) told us last year we ought to pass this Bill because a host of half-educated people and the Jews, Turks, and Chinese are in favour of it. Much as I respect Jews, Turks, and Chinese, I think it is hard that a change of law should be imposed on the English people because Jews, Turks, and Chinese are in favour of it. We have also had paraded before us by the hon. Member for Essex and others what they call the consensus of opinion of the civilised world, a phrase we have heard used before in support of other political and legislative changes. The hon. Member appealed to Europe, but Europe, in his opinion, must consist of Holland, Russia, and Turkey, for they are the only nations in Europe in which marriage with a deceased wife's sister is lawful at the present time. The hon. Member referred to the colonies, but I presume the hon. Member leaves out of the list all the Crown colonies, and such colonies as the Cape of Good Hope and Natal, for marriage with wife's sister is illegal there, as it is in Great Britain. The hon. Member contended that the state of things in the United States affords a good argument in favour of his measure, but every one knows that the Marriage Laws in the United States are such that the greatest anxiety is entertained by all intelligent Americans with regard to the state of society to which the present law of marriage and divorce will lead. I have heard of one American who married three sisters in succession, and used to tell a fourth sister, "Kitty, don't lose heart, your time will come." All the Christian churches are opposed to such marriages, and so are the two great Codes, the Code Napoléon and the new Italian Code — Codes which were certainly not framed on Church principles. But the Bill is retrospective. It will create by Act of Parliament many marriages. If the Bill passes I do not know how many couples will be united in the bonds of matrimony without. Then, again, even their consent being obtained, I object to it upon the ground that it is retrograde legislation with regard to women. Why are women to be placed in this matter on a different footing to men? The tendency of the present day is to place women on the same footing as men, but it is not proposed to allow a woman to unite herself with a deceased husband's brother. Again, the promoters of the Bill say that the present law is very hard upon women. Let the women speak for themselves. Next, they maintain that a sister-in-law makes the best nurse for the children of her sister. If they are to go on that principle, I should say that the mother-in-law will make the best housekeeper, and best nurse for her grand-children. It is the mother-in-law, then, that they should have regard for. It was suggested not long ago that we should wait until women obtain the franchise, and then introduce this Bill. That is a very good suggestion, because if women possess votes better means will be afforded of forming a just opinion upon this subject. I object to the Bill, because it is wanting in logic, because it will destroy the principle upon which the present system is founded, without supplying us with a principle upon which to re-construct it, because it will have an injurious social influence, and because it will destroy domestic peace in many homes, merely for the satisfaction of a comparatively few persons.

*(3.23.) MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): The hon. Member for Shropshire (Mr. S. Leighton) referred to what he was pleased to call the delusion of the working man in favour of this measure; but when he did that he entirely destroyed the argument of his Friend the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Talbot), who said the working men were not in favour of the proposed change of the law. I believe the working men are in favour of it. I believe they are under no delusion whatever, but are of opinion that the measure will be of great benefit to them. Some hon.

Members opposite have shown great anxiety for the deceased husband's brother. Are any of them prepared to put an Amendment on the Paper, and to ask the House to accept it? The fact of the matter is, that hon. Members know that, on both sides of the House, there is the strongest objection to such an Amendment, and they only trot it out because they hope to catch some votes by bringing it forward. The promoters of the Bill are perfectly willing to meet hon. Gentlemen opposite in every possible way they can in Committee, but I state, in the face of the House, that we are not prepared to extend the Bill one jot or tittle. The Bill is intended to promote uniformity between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and if we adopt the suggestion to extend the measure to other degrees of affinity we shall, instead of promoting uniformity throughout the British Empire, make confusion worse confounded. We desire to repeal the unjust restrictions of the Act of 1835, and beyond that we do not desire to go. The hon. Member for the University of Oxford complained about the wording of the 2nd clause. In that clause it is stated that no clergyman shall be liable to prosecution for refusing to perform the marriage ceremony in the case contemplated by the Bill. But then, if a clergyman has a scruple, he must not prevent another clergyman taking his place because he has a right over the church. If there are words in any of the clauses which can be fairly altered without trenching on the principle of the Bill, the supporters of the measure will willingly accept such alteration. My hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. H. Gardner) in introducing the Bill hoped some new argument would be brought forward. The hon. and learned Member for Finsbury (Mr. Gainsford Bruce) complied with that request, for he brought forward a new and very curious argument for an hon. Gentleman learned in the law. The hon. and learned Gentleman said that the rule of marriage we are anxious to alter has existed in the country for centuries. Surely the learned Gentleman must be aware that the Act which we desire to repeal has only existed since 1835! Does the hon. and learned Member mean to say that by the Common Law before 1835 these marriages were illegal?

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: By the Common Law such marriages were not set aside; that could only be done by sentence of the Ecclesiastical Court. The Act does not affect the validity of the marriage.

*MR. HENEAGE: Before 1835, unless the marriage was impeached, it was legal, and the validity of the marriage could only be impeached during the lifetime of the husband. You might as well say that no marriages are legal in this country because when the banns are given out somebody may raise an objection to the marriage taking place. It was during the lifetime of the husband such a marriage could only be impeached, but if he died before impeachment then the wife became a widow legally, and his children were deemed legitimate. But that is not the case now, when the man dies the wife is not considered a widow, and his children are not considered legitimate, and should the man leave any property in this country, or if a colonist comes to this country, resides here and dies here, and leaves wife and children after such a marriage, these have to pay the full amount of Legacy Duty precisely as if they were not related to the dead husband and father. The law, I say, is a very different thing to what it was before 1835. It was a strange peculiarity in the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman that he, having laid down certain matters of fact, went back almost to the dark ages to prove them, and said little of later history. We are accused of attacking an outpost while it is said we have designs against the whole degrees of affinity. But there is no reason to doubt our good faith when we say, as we have said on previous occasions, that our only object is to repeal the restriction that now prevails, and prevails in this country alone, to marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister. I was very much surprised to hear the hon. and learned Gentleman, who is a stout Churchman, found himself on the position of the Church of Rome regarding these marriages. I can accept such an argument coming from the hon. Member for Donegal (Mr. A.

O'Connor), because he speaks as a believer in the discipline of his Church, but for a member of the Church of England to contend that marriages are against Divine law, which can take place by the dispensation of the head of another Church, appears to me to be but a sorry argument for a Member of the Church of England to use. May I remind the House of some facts in regard to the Act of 1835, which have been little thought of in debate? Prior to 1835, as I have already stated, these marriages were not void at Common Law, unless they were impeached during the lifetime of the man contracting the marriage, and, in 1835, when the Bill was brought forward, those who promoted the change of the law had no intention to prevent these marriages; their object was to prevent the impeachment of them for more than a limited time; but they found that they could not carry their Bill, and so they agreed to an iniquitous bargain, by which the marriages that had taken place were made legal and all future marriages were made absolutely illegal. I cannot imagine how Bishops of the Church of England came to make such a compromise. If they believed such marriages were wrong they ought never to have consented to the sanction of previous marriages. This law was never accepted by the people of England; it was against public opinion. On previous occasions I have quoted the opinion of Lord Francis Egerton, who stated the law was not accepted, and never had been, and the Royal Commission to which the hon. Member for Roxburghshire (Mr. A. Elliot) has referred declared that the law was immoral from its very foundation, and had ever been bad for the people. We have heard again to-day something of the Scriptural argument. Now, this Scriptural argument was never worth much, and it becomes worth less year by year. We have had a recent revision of the Scriptures, and the revision of the passage upon which reliance in this argument is placed has shown there is nothing in it. We have had a Colonial Conference in London, at which Colonial Representatives protested against Her Majesty's subjects being allowed to contract marriages in the colonies, and yet, coming here, find those marriages declared illegal. We have had a German revision of the Scriptures, too, and the learned President, Dr. Schroder, has expressed his opinion that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is not forbidden by the Mosaic law, and that the passage so much relied on to prove the objection is only directed against a man taking the sister during his wife's life-time and setting up the sisters as rivals. The chief Jewish Authorities have unanimously confirmed this view, and hold that the Rabbinical Law does not forbid marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and we must accept them as being able to give a better opinion on the reading of the 18th chapter of Leviticus than the hon. and learned Member. How is this restriction kept up? It is not kept up by the wish of the Representatives of the people in this House, it is kept up by the vote of the Bishops in another place, who prevent these marriages, not only in their own church but in all other churches. If this were only Church Law, only Church of England churches would be affected by it; but being the law of the land it operates against such marriages in all churches throughout Great Britain and Ireland. We know, as a matter of fact, that many of the Church of England, many Presbyterian Churches, and many churches outside England, who follow the Anglican form, are in favour of the restriction being removed.

(3.40.) The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): No, no!

*Mr. HENEAGE: My right hon. Friend disputes that; but I think results show that I am stating a fact. Have not many of our Colonies passed laws legalising such marriages? But I do not wish to detain the House at greater length. I should have liked to have had more Members taking part in the Debate, and I should be glad to have the question settled. If our opponents have public opinion on their side, let them show it. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion for the Second Reading said he had had no experience in getting up Petitions; but here he might have found an opportunity for trying his hand, and sure I am that his experience would have shown him unmistakably that he had not public opinion on his side. It is not by the wish of the Representatives of the people that the law is maintained; but it is maintained by the votes of a few hereditary Peers and of the Bishops in the House of Lords; and but for these votes this Bill would have been the law of the land many years ago.

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The arguments on this subject have been stated so often that it is not surprising there is not a full attendance of Members; but when great interests are involved in the assertion of a principle it behoves those who maintain it not to be slow to avow their convictions, and to resist to the last a change in the law which they deem to be inexpedient, and not in harmony with the general sentiments of society. Often as the arguments for a change have been stated, as they have just been put by the right hon. Gentleman they seem more shadowy and less convincing than ever. They chiefly rest upon the inclinations of individuals to contract marriages which are contrary to the Civil and to the Ecclesiastical Law, upon the fact that some foreign countries and some British colonies have altered their laws, and upon assertions that public opinion in this country is in favour of a change in the law. It is to be regretted that a larger number of Members did not hear the statements made with so much ability and fulness by the hon. Members for the Holborn Division and the University of Oxford. It is still necessary, I think, that such statements as have been made by the hon. Member for Darlington and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby should be met at once with the denial which, in my opinion, it is very easy to give to them. The hon. Member for Darlington has said that there is urgent need for an alteration of the law, because there are people who, in defiance of the law, have entered into these marriages. Unfortunately, it happens that a great many persons reject the duty of marriage before cohabitation, and spend their lives in a state of sin;

Mr. Heneage

but it does not follow that on that account the ordinance of marriage should be done away with. It is not for the sake of the breakers of the law that a law should be abolished. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby has referred to the difference of the law in the colonies. I know something about the law in the colonies, as I happened to be Governor of the colony of South Australia, when that colony, the first of all the colonies, passed the law legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and I am in a position to say that the agitation on the subject was altogether artificial and factitious. The measure was passed in opposition to the whole religious conviction of the colony, and there is not at this moment one clergyman of the Church of England in that colony who will celebrate these marriages. I ventured, therefore, to dissent from the right hon. Gentleman when he stated that church feeling in the colonies was in favour of the change. For some years after the passing of the Act for South Australia there was one clergyman, of no very good reputation, who solemnised these marriages for the sake of the high fees exacted; but now, I say, no clergyman in the colony will solemnise these marriages. I do not think that that shows that the church opinion of the colony is in favour of the law. It is quite true that a majority of the House of Commons has in successive years passed this Bill, and that it has only been thrown out by a majority in the House of Lords, composed, no doubt, partly of Bishops. I do not know what the Bishops sit in the House of Lords for unless they are prepared to maintain the Christian element in our laws. At all events, I do not think the House of Lords would have rejected this Bill year after year had public sentiment in the country been so strong as has been represented. In my opinion, the House of Lords better expresses the feeling of the country on this subject than the House of Commons. I am not aware that there is any such manifestation of public opinion as will justify anybody in saying that the country is in favour of a change in the law. I have the honour to represent a popular constituency, very largely composed of working men, and I have received no representation whatever to that effect. I think if the working men of Manchester do not put any such pressure upon their Representative I have a right to conclude that there is no strong feeling among the working classes in favour of this proposal. It is a device, I had almost said a hypocritical device, to represent this movement as emanating from the working classes. The hon. Member for Roxburgh has expressed some doubt as to the law of Scotland on the subject.

Mr. A. ELLIOT: I quoted legal opinion, showing that the law is doubtful.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I do not deal with a statement confessedly but on *obiter dictum.*

Mr. A. ELLIOT: It was an opinion given in reply to an inquiry by those interested in getting the law altered.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: But my hon. Friend will look a long time before he will find a decision from the Bench in conformity with his interpretation of the law. The Act of 1690 adopted the *Confession of Faith* as the Civil Law of Scotland.

Mr. A. ELLIOT: It was upon this point Lord Rutherford expressed the doubt as to whether an article in the *Confession of Faith* became the law of the land.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: No Scotch lawyer will say that the children born of such marriages are legitimate. I do not wish to detain the House at great length; but I must refer to a remark of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who said that the reference of my hon. Friend (Mr. Bruce) to the decisions of the Church of Rome was no solid argument as tending to show the unanimity of opinion among Christian Churches.

*Mr. HENEAGE: No; I said I was surprised that a member of the Church of England should quote the Church of Rome, where such marriages are allowed by the dispensation of the Pope.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I will refer to the position of the Roman Church in another sense. I think the opponents of the Bill are entitled to say that the Christian Church is unanimous in its opposition to the change; and in this connection I think I am entitled to refer to the position of the Roman Catholic Church as going to make up the consensus of ecclesiastical authority. If it is said that the temptation to break the law of the Church in this matter is so strong, I would ask whether members of the Roman Catholic Church find the temptation too strong? Is not the prohibition of such marriages by that Church sufficient, in the enormous majority of cases, to deter its members from contracting them? I do not think that because the law of the Church of England sits more lightly upon its members that is an argument in favour of this change. If there is one institution which better illustrates the purity of the Christian faith than another it is the institution of marriage. A man by his marriage makes his wife's relations his own, and I venture to say we are not to be told that we are to interpret the Old Testament by Jewish lights. If we do so we shall have to reject the interpretation we now put on many passages which are the basis of our faith. Our interpretation of the Old Testament rests upon the spirit not upon the letter. On this our laws of marriage are based, and the relations between man and wife placed upon a higher footing, ennobling society and carrying Christianity into the most intimate relations of life. There may be some upon whom these considerations sit lightly, who desire more freedom, or, as I should say, more license; but not for these would I relax those old rules which have placed the institution of marriage on a high footing, and those restrictions which the Christian Church places upon men following their own inclinations. It is evident that the Christian Church has imposed an obligation which ought not to be lightly set aside; and I venture to say that if this Bill were passed it would be found that one of the principles of Christian marriage would be seriously weakened. Before I sit down I should like to draw attention to a contrast which the country is sure to notice, and that is in regard to the amount of attention paid to what is after all but a small question compared with one which touches the well-being of our social life. We were told last night that the time of the House would not permit the discussion of the licensing question. It is a remarkable fact that the whole of one day should be given up by the House to discussing this question, which is of infinitesimal importance as compared with licensing. Why should we be called upon to discuss the subject of marriage with a deceased wife's sister apart from the larger question of the sweeping away all the prohibited degrees of affinity? There are degrees of affinity less close than that of a deceased wife's sister, and yet it is not proposed to do away with the prohibition with regard to them. My last objection to this proposal is that it is an insult to and a slur upon the working men of this country to suppose that they cannot respect the restrictions of the law ecclesiastical which prevents them from marrying their deceased wives' sisters, and that a working man cannot live in the same house with his sister-in-law without abusing and seducing her. A greater insult was never cast upon the people.

*(4.5.) MR. J. R. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): It was brought to the knowledge of the late Lord Hatherley, who opposed this amendment of the law on the ground that there were so few cases of marriage with a deceased wife's sister among the lower classes, that in a very small area indeed there were 100 such cases. Those who oppose this measure appear to have forgotten the Report of a Royal Commission which sat in 1847, in which it was stated that there was considerable diversity of opinion on the question among the clergy of the Church of England, a great many of whom believed that such marriages are not prohibited by the law of God. If such a great diversity of opinion prevailed among the clergy of the Church of England in those days, what reason is there for supposing that a similar diversity of opinion does not prevail among them at the present time? Many clergymen advocate the change in the law proposed by this Bill in the interests of morality and of religion. It is a matter of public knowledge that a well-known clergyman in the South of London wishes the Bill carried, and that he holds that there is nothing in the disputed text from Leviticus, and nothing in the law of God, against these marriages. We are told that we are making an attack upon the purity, the integrity, and the liberty of married life; but do those who make that charge impute to our colonies, where such marriages are lawful, that their married life is less pure than it is in this country, or do they impute that Englishmen are more base in their morals than the Canadians are? Under our existing law scandal may arise when a man lives in the same house with a young and beautiful sister-in-law after his wife's death; whereas if the law is altered, as they will be at liberty to marry there will be no scandal at all in their living in the same house, because if they wish to do so they can get married. If I feel strongly about this matter it is because, as the law now stands, there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. I know of one instance in which the High Sheriff of a county married his deceased wife's sister, who was received everywhere in society as his legitimate wife, and no one has ever dared to impeach the validity of their marriage or the legitimacy of their children. The children of poor people, however, under such circumstances would be branded as bastards. It is perfectly well-known that rich people set the law at defiance with the full approval of their friends; and there are instances of people who have sacrificed home and friends and have gone to other English-speaking countries where their position cannot be called in question; but still poorer people can neither enjoy immunity from censure nor avail themselves of the remedy of expatriation. The 1847 Commission found that there were in this country at least 500 of these marriages per annum; and as it is known that there are 1,000 a year in France, there is every reason to suppose there are now quite as many in this country. In Manchester, Liverpool, and other large towns it is found that these marriages are being constantly contracted among the poorer classes; and as to this, the Royal Commission of 1847 pointed out that with these people who are now held up to odium as law-breakers, the sense of religion was no less strong than with other people, and that their lives were in no degree marked by greater laxity of conduct. I think it is time that this stigma cast

upon them by an odious law is removed.

*(4.22.) THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. M. T. STORMONTH DARLING, Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): I should like, in response to the challenge of the hon. and learned Member for Roxburghshire, to make a statement as to the present state of the law in Scotland. It does not depend upon a critical and precise reading of the text in Leviticus; but it depends upon a broad statement in the *Confession of Faith* ratified by an Act of Parliament. The doubts expressed by Lord Rutherford and Lord Fraser were of the most hesitating kind, and they admitted that all the institutional writers on the law of Scotland, with one accord, pronounced against the validity of such marriages. If this view be not accepted it can be easily tested by an action to decide the validity of a marriage. From the first the law of Scotland has recognised these marriages as illegal. For my own part, I shall oppose the Bill because the present state of the law is logical and consistent, and the Bill would make it illogical and inconsistent.

*(4.26.) SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I should not have taken part in the Debate this afternoon if it had not been for the speech of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, which presents a very narrow view of the question before the House. I was very much surprised to hear a man of his experience make such a speech. He quoted the views of the Church Councils and ministers. I am not one of those who are accustomed to take their religious views from other people. I am not accustomed to look to the clergyman or to the minister for those views. I am accustomed rather to turn to the Bible as a guide in faith and morals, and I say that no man studying the Bible with an enlightened conscience for himself can find anything in it which prohibits these marriages. A great deal has been said on both sides on certain not very clear passages of Mosaic law without throwing any definite light. The right hon. Gentleman went on to deal with the case of the colonies, and suggested that we ought to be bound by the law of the Christian Church rather than that of a Legislature. But we make laws here for the observance of the State Church. It is not so many years ago that we laid down a new Litany for the Church of England and compelled clergymen to read those portions of Scripture we selected for them each Lords Day.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: In the colony to which I referred there is no State Church at all, and clergymen are not compelled to perform these marriages.

*SIR J. PEASE: Very well. Let me just ask what is the law of the Colonies? The child of the marriage is legitimate, and that child inherits the colonial property in case of intestacy; but if the parents come over here the marriage is regarded as illegal, and the child as illegitimate, and does not inherit in case of intestacy. That is the position in which we place the people in our colonies and other distant parts of the Empire, there being one set of laws for the United Kingdom, and another for our Colonial Possessions. What is right and moral in the Colonies is neither right nor moral here. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that this is a rich man's question, and not a poor man's. He must have forgotten the fact that no fewer than 10,000 of the cabmen of this Metropolis signed a Petition that was sent to the House of Lords in favour of this Bill, they being a class of men who, by reason of their business, are necessarily a great deal away from their homes, and who feel that they have a real grievance, owing to the present state of the law. I might mention the case of a friend of my own, who has recently died. He went abroad and there married his deceased wife's sister; but according to the English law that marriage was not legal, and the child of that marriage is by law here a bastard to this day. The poor lady fell ill, and during her illness had only a very few friends who would visit her; while in another case I know of a person, who had contracted a similar marriage, went with the wife to whom he had been married abroad to the Communion Table of his parish church, and they were refused the Sacrament. Can it be said that these things are helps to religion and morality? It seems to me that they are entirely opposed to morality and religion. These are the arguments I have before used in support of the principle of this Bill; and it is because they appear to me to be deserving of serious consideration that I now put them to the House, in the hope that the House may be induced to assent to an alteration of the law, which I believe will be consistent with religion, justice, and morality.

*(4.35.) COLONEL MAKINS (Essex, S.W.): It is perfectly clear that there is a great difference of opinion on this subject, and an utter absence of that general consensus of view which is essential for the carrying of a measure of this kind. The hon. Member for Camberwell has made a most impassioned appeal to the House in the interests of those who have broken the law or who are tempted to break it; but I ask the House to consider whether a law is necessarily a bad law, either because there are some who break it or who desire to break it. When a question of this kind has been debated for 40 or 50 years it is difficult to say anything new about it. Many arguments have been used by hon. Gentlemen opposite in support of this measure; but I think that before the House is called upon to take up a question of such unlimited importance as a change in the Marriage Law of this country some very strong feeling ought to be manifested out of doors, some force that will drive the House into legislation, instead of its being brought up as a sort of hardy annual by any hon. Member, or set of Members, in this House. The condition of the House during the debate and the paucity of Petitions that have been presented for or against the measure are, I think, quite sufficient to show that there is no great feeling on this question outside the House, except perhaps on the part of those who either have broken or who contemplate the breaking of the law. Hitherto this question is one that has been studiously kept outside the range of Party politics, and I, for one, am anxious that that state of things should continue, but I may state that I have to-day received a circular from the Treasurer of a Society called The Marriage Law Reform Association, in which I am told if the Unionists do not support this measure the Unionist alliance will be in danger. This means that we are endangering the Unionist cause—and we are to put our consciences in our pockets. I do not think that that sort of pressure will have much effect on this House, and I believe that every hon. Member who may vote on this measure will vote according to his conscience without any regard to his political interests. I can quite understand those who look upon marriage simply in the light of a civil contract, not thinking it of much importance to maintain the present law; but to those who regard marriage as an interchange of life-long vows before the Almighty it is a matter of very great importance. I would suggest to those who are so anxious to bring the law into line with that prevailing in our colonies that they should begin at the other end. They should call on the Government to take up the whole question of the Marriage Laws, which at present is in a very complicated condition, especially, I may say, North of the Tweed. The matter should be carefully considered and legislated upon; and the first thing to be done should be to make performance of the civil rite obligatory and compulsory in every case of marriage, leaving each Church or religious body to solemnise the religious portion of the ceremony in accordance with its peculiar doctrines and tenets. That, I think, would be an intelligible starting point. The hon. Baronet the Member for Durham (Sir Joseph Pease) used the argument that this House has the power to alter the laws of the Church of England. If he means the laws affecting the property of the Church, I am with him, but if he means that this House can alter the law relating to the sacred obligations and the duties of the clergy, I entirely disagree with him. For several years I have had on the Order Book of the House a Motion for an Address praying for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into these matters, and I think that would be the proper way of dealing with the question. The hon. Member for Camberwell, in putting this question forward as a poor man's question, said Lord Hatherley had been told that within the limits of one parish as to which he had made inquiries there were as many as 100 cases that would be affected by this Bill. But Lord Hatherley's reply to that statement was that he only wanted to arrive at the truth, and he should be

glad if he were furnished with the names and residences of those persons, but this information was not forthcoming. I think that a great deal more must be done in the way of bringing evidence before this House before it will feel disposed to make so great a change in the law as would be affected by this Bill. The alteration of the law in the way proposed would have the effect either of very much hastening Disestablishment, or of providing a crop of clerical martyrs such as sprang up under the Public Worship Regulation Act. Moreover, it must be remembered that women are much more interested in this matter than men, and I unhesitatingly state that the proposed change is unpopular with women. There has been no attempt on the part of women to promote this change, and we know that if they desired it they would not be behindhand in bringing their views before this House. I may state that I have never been asked the question at any election in reference to this matter, and although there are 16,000 voters in my constituency I have never received more than one letter on this subject from any one of those persons. Therefore, I think it idle to say there is a strong public feeling on this question; and, until there is such a feeling, I think the House will be very ill-advised in tampering with a law which is not only the law of this land, but has been the law of all Christendom from the earliest ages. Sir, I trust that we may reverse the verdict of former occasions, and I feel sure that, at any rate, until the Marriage Laws are taken up as a whole and dealt with in a statesmanlike manner, the feeling of the country will be that the law had better remain as it is.

*(4.45.) MR. J. A. BRIGHT (Birmingham, Central): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member who has just sat down said a much larger consensus of opinion was required before we could be called upon to repeal the law which now exists. This seems to me to be the wrong way of looking at the question, and that a consensus is necessary to maintain the law as it is at present, which is not supported by those who have no conscientious objections in this matter. The hon Member for Shropshire, who spoke earlier, said this law was founded on no principle, and it appeared to me that he might have applied that term to the opposition to the Bill. I cannot gather that there is any argument on the ground of Scripture. A certain extremely obscure text in Leviticus is referred to, and that is made the reason for supporting a law of this kind. But there is another text in Deuteronomy which is by no means obscure, and that is the text which enjoins that a man shall marry his deceased brother's widow. If we are to take one doubtful text as our rule, and throw to the winds another by no means obscure text, where is our consistency? I am reminded of the text as to the slavery of Onesimus, which commanded the belief of the southern slave-holder, who said that was the text for him, and that he considered all the rest of the Scriptures was purely figurative. Hon. Gentlemen have not gone back far enough. They go back to mediæval times, when a great many artificial matters were introduced into Christianity. They do not go back to the time, for instance, when the book called the *Doctrines of the twelve Apostles* was written, which shows a very simple state of ritual and of worship in those days. But if we go back to Leviticus, I do not see why we should not go back to Genesis, where the second marriage spoken of was between a brother and his sister. The hon. Member for Manchester, in a remarkable speech, asserted that the decrees of the Church are binding on us. On whom? I do not consider that they are binding on me; and there is a large dissenting population who do not consider the decrees of the Church as in any way binding upon them. If hon. Gentlemen wish these marriages to remain illegal among members of the Church of England, by all means let them keep the law of the Church so, and let them refrain from marrying their sisters-in-law, however attractive, but let them leave the poor dissenter to do as he thinks right. The hon. Member for the Oxford University said what a hardship it would be if one clergyman were allowed to perform the Marriage Service in the case of a man who wedded his deceased wife's

sister in the church of a clergyman who was opposed to such marriages. It was rather a curious expression which the hon. Member used—"his church."

*MR. TALBOT: I was quoting the words of the section of the Bill now before the House.

*MR. J. A. BRIGHT: It seemed to me that the hon. Member rather regarded the church as private property. But, in my opinion, a church is a State public building, and the minister is a State public officer; and if the law says that people have a right to be married in a certain way, certainly the clergyman who refuses to perform the service because of conscientious objections, must allow someone else, who is not actuated by that feeling, to do it for him. The hon. Member for Shropshire spoke of marriage with a deceased husband's brother. There is no demand for such an alteration of the law; but I should be perfectly willing to agree to it, and I am unable to see that any argument has been brought against it. The hon. Member for Camberwell has said that this is distinctly a poor man's question, and it is all very well for hon. Gentlemen opposite to say that poor men do not seek an alteration of the law; but a number of cases could be brought to prove this point. Well-to-do people who make these marriages can go abroad to have them solemnised, but in the case of a man occupying two rooms, whose wife dies, how can his deceased wife's sister live in that small space with him, to look after his children, without incurring that risk of scandal against which only marriage can protect her, and he cannot go abroad to be married. Mr. Speaker, I think we have sufficient real sins, without trying to make artificial ones. I think that the text which has been alluded to will be considered, by people whose minds have not been sophisticated by ecclesiastical technicalities, as having no reference at all to the subject which we are discussing. There is another point —an important one. In the colonies we have freedom from this restraint. What is the position of a man who is married under this law in the colonies, if he desires to come and again visit the old country before he dies? Why, if he dies here, his children are not considered legitimate. That is a very unjust stigma to cast upon them. The fact is the situation is becoming more absurd year by year, and before long, I think, this law will be regarded as are the Test Acts, and the regulations which prevented the hon. Member for Northampton from taking his seat in this House. I feel very anxious indeed that this House should show that its interest in this question has not at all passed away, and that we shall have a larger majority in favour of it than has ever been given before.

*(4.47) MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I would not have ventured to intervene in this debate if it had not been that the fact of dispensations being sometimes granted by the world-wide communion to which I have the honour to belong has been unduly emphasised. The hon. Gentleman has referred to the marriage between brother and sister, which was the original foundation of the Marriage Law, so far as the children of Adam and Eve were concerned, but the Christian Church does not say that such marriages are good. On the contrary, they have always been forbidden, though not against the primeval Divine law. But they depend upon a Divine sanction, just as the Sunday observance depends upon the original command to keep the seventh day of the week holy. If you come to later times, you have polygamy. But you cannot go to patriarchial times or to the Jewish dispensation. You must accept the Marriage Law solely on its merits as the social basis of the Christian dispensation and as the accepted law of Christian Governments. The hon. Member has referred to Papal dispensations. I defy him to point to any dispensations granted before the time of Pope Alexander Borgia. It is quite true the modern Church, for grave reasons, has granted such dispensations, but I have reason to believe they will be fewer in future because of the danger of this law being broken down. I do not oppose the Bill because it is contrary to Divine law in the absolute sense of the word, but because it is contrary to the sacred law, as it has been legitimally modified for us by the authority of the Church. The Christian

idea of marriage makes the relation between a man and his wife's relatives the same as between him and his own relatives—exactly the same as if they were blood relations. That is the fundamental idea of the Christian religion, which has purified and elevated the human race in a degree unknown to heathen states. Being a Conservative and an Englishman, I think it would be a great detriment to the happiness and prosperity of our country if we were to break down our ancient tradition. As to the Church of England —which I desire to see maintain its position until the long-wished-for re-union between the Churches of Christendom takes place—I trust it will always oppose the passing of this measure. The Church of England cannot and will not sanction this marriage, and to pass this Bill would be to offend the Church, to disorganise society, and to upset all ordinary views of right and wrong. I say to pass the Bill would be to interfere with and obscure the universally accepted ideas of right and wrong which affects the whole well-being of the country and our social customs. I think it would be most deplorable if the House were to lightly tamper with this matter. We are told that the colonies have accepted the principle of this measure, and that we ought to do likewise, in order to have one uniform system, but it seems to me a very modern and radical idea that we are to take our ideas of right and wrong from our children. I trust that the dispensation of the Church of Rome will not be quoted as an argument in favour of this Bill. The Church of Rome is the only institution in the world that is able to maintain the law, and at the same time give dispensations. We have a law in our Church which is occasionally dispensed with, but the law is rendered none the less effective by the possibility of breaking it down in exceptional cases; but in this country if you interfere with the law the principle at stake will altogether disappear.

(5.5.) The House divided :—Ayes 222; Noes 155.—(Div. List, No. 65.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday, 25th June.

GUARDIANS OF THE POOR (ELECTION) BILL.—(No. 33.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N.): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill, I desire to say that it is the outcome of the bye-election of last autumn, and is drawn exactly on the lines of the Local Government Act of 1888. It is a perfectly straightforward and innocent Bill, and, so far as I know, there is not concealed in it any clause that ought to be objected to by hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. It proceeds on the same register as the Local Government Act, and provides that the elections to Boards of Guardians shall be conducted by Ballot, and that the plural vote shall be abolished. It contains a provision for the appointment of *ex officio* Guardians, whom personally I should be glad to see abolished. Now, if anyone has taught the country that these are desirable principles it is the present Government, who have impressed on us that these are the conditions on which elections ought to be conducted. The election of last autumn taught me that there is no measure which would more readily appeal to the sympathies of agricultural labourers than one to enable them to elect their own Guardians. At present the labourers of the country take very little interest in elections to Boards of Guardians, because they know that they are likely to be swamped by the plural votes, and because pressure can be brought to bear upon them under the system of open voting. The President of the Local Government Board has on the Paper a Bill providing for an appeal from Sanitary Authorities under the Allotments Act. I hold that the electors should themselves be the body appealed to. If this view is adopted, elections to Boards of Guardians will be regarded seriously; those who vote will feel that something depends upon their votes, and the labourers especially will feel that their acquisition of allotments depends upon the Guardians elected. Let the labourer feel that if he allows himself to be cajoled into sending on to the Board of Guardians a man who does not represent him he must submit to it, until another election comes round. Imitation is said to be the sincerest form of flattery, and I would point out to the President of the Local Government Board that this measure is an imitation of his Local Government Act. In every clause I have endeavoured to incorporate the principles of that Act. It may be objected that the passing of this Bill may interfere with the establishment of District Councils, but I do not think there need be any fear of that. On the contrary, I think it would be a reason why great disappointment would not be felt if the introduction of a District Councils Bill is postponed this Session. It is very generally felt now that Guardians do not do their duty in respect of sanitary matters, such as water supply, drainage, and insanitary dwellings. If this Bill is passed, the voters will only have themselves to blame if the Guardians do not discharge their duties satisfactorily. If the measure can be improved in any respect I shall gladly accept Amendments. Speaking for myself, if any Amendments should be proposed to bring the Bill more into harmony with the Local Government Act I shall be perfectly ready to accept them. I am sure if hon. Members opposite will take the trouble to read the Bill they will come to the conclusion that it is a *bonâ fide* attempt to deal with admitted evils.

It being half after Five of the o'clock, further proceedings stood adjourned till to-morrow.

FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 53.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Marjoribanks.*)

Sir H. MAXWELL (Wigton): I trust the hon. Gentleman will not press the Motion now. The Government are not yet in a position to present their Bill on the subject.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I think I have a right to ask when the Government Bill will be produced.

Captain Verney

Sir H. MAXWELL: I am afraid I cannot take the responsibility of saying when the Government Bill will be presented.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS: May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I think if I were to undertake the management of the affairs of Scotland, the Scotch Members would be down on me. I will inquire when the Bill will be ready.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE BILL [LORDS.] (No. 230.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order for the Second Reading be deferred till Monday next."

*Mr. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I should like to know whether this is a Government Bill or not; it was a Government Bill in the House of Lords, but in our Paper the asterisk is not placed opposite the Order. If it is a Government measure I want to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will deal with it as he deals with other Government measures, and make such arrangements that there can be such a Debate as so important a question demands.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Clearly a measure of this importance does require the careful consideration of the House, and I will take care to make such arrangements as will permit of such consideration being given to it. Of course, after the Second Reading the Bill will be referred to one of the Grand Commitees.

Question put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Second Report, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 157.]

MOTIONS.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (PROCEDURE BILL.)

On Motion of Mr. Finlay, Bill to amend the Procedure of the Supreme Court of Judicature in England, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Finlay, Mr. Asquith, Sir Henry James, Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Robert Reid, Mr. Charles Hall, and Mr. Bruce.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 245.]

LOCAL TAXATION (CUSTOMS AND EXCISE) DUTIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Ritchie, Bill for the distribution and application of certain Duties of Customs and Excise, and for other purposes connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Arthur Balfour, and the Lord Advocate.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 244.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (WALES) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Roberts, Bill to amend "The Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Wales) Act, 1881," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Roberts, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Sir Hussey Vivian, Mr. Bryn Roberts, and Mr. Arthur Williams.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 246.]

CUSTOMS CONSOLIDATION ACT (1876) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Albert Rollit, Bill to further amend "The Customs Consolidation Act, 1876," ordered to be brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Sir John Lubbock, Colonel Hill, Mr. Sexton, Mr. William M'Arthur, Mr. Maclure, and Mr. Craig.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 247.]

PURCHASE OF LAND, &c. (IRELAND) BILL.

On the Motion for Adjournment,

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): There are still a large number of Members on this side of the House who desire to take part in the Debate on the Irish Land Purchase Bill; and therefore I should like to know whether it is the intention of the Government, in view of this fact, to close the Debate to-morrow?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: A definite arrangement has been arrived at between both sides of the House that the Division should take place to-morrow evening; but with a view of giving hon. Gentlemen opposite a little more latitude, I have given notice to move the suspension of the 12 o'clock Rule. I trust, however, it will not be necessary for us to sit unduly late.

*MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I do not know whether it has been represented to the First Lord of the Treasury or not; but there is a considerable body of opinion on this side of the House hostile to the progress of the Bill, which has not as yet found expression in any speech but that of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). I would suggest to the First Lord and the Government that they would lose very little if they gave us Friday as an additional day for the discussion of the Bill. If we cannot raise the question of principle on the Second Reading, I give notice that we shall raise it probably at greater length on every available opportunity in Committee.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: As there has been some captious newspaper criticisms of the length to which this Debate has extended, I would like to recall to the right hon. Gentleman's recollection the actual time consumed on the last great Irish Land Bill, namely, that of 1881, when the Party opposite were out of office and the Liberal Party were in power. The Second Reading of the Irish Land Bill of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian was moved on April 25, 1881. The Debate on the Second Reading lasted eight days, and the Division was not taken till May 19 The Committee stage began on May 26, and lasted 37 days. The Report stage occupied three days, and the Third Reading Debate lasted two days. I make no prophesy as to the time which will be consumed on the Committee stage of the present Bill, which I may observe is much more complicated than the Bill of 1881. But, having regard to the fact that eight days were given to the discussion on the Second Reading of the Bill of 1881, it is not an unreasonable demand to make that the present Debate should not be limited to four days and a half.

Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): In confirmation of the statement of the hon. Member for Dundee, let me say there are several hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House who are opposed altogether to the principle of the Bill, and who have not yet been heard. I do not wish to urge a course that would be inconvenient to the House; but I think it would be convenient to Members if Friday were given up to the Debate.

***Captain VERNEY**: I belong to the very small class of Members who do not wish to speak on the Bill, but who wish to hear what has to be said; and I know there is a great deal to be said that has not yet found the opportunity of expression. I hope an additional day will be given on the Second Reading.

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: The hon. and gallant Gentleman has had many opportunities of hearing the Debate; but I have not observed that the hon. and gallant Gentleman always formed part of the limited audiences who occasionally were present during the discussions. I have myself been in the House very frequently when there were not more than 15 or 20 Members present for hours together, and I am not sure that the hon. and gallant Gentleman was one of them. I always desire, as far as possible, to meet the wishes of hon. Members on both sides; but an understanding was arrived at last week that the Division should be taken to-morrow, and on the basis that a four nights' Debate would be sufficient. If, now, on Wednesday evening the Government were to alter that arrangement great inconvenience would be caused to Members in all parts of the kingdom. When a great measure is before the House it is always customary to arrive at an understanding as to the period of the conclusion of the Debate. I hope that the hon. Gentlemen who have just spoken will find a further opportunity of expressing their sentiments; but they have already, by their short speeches this evening, shown their decided opposition to the Bill. That is a contribution to the consideration of the question that both the House and the country will value. At all events, it will save them from the extreme disappointment of not having expressed their opinions. But there will be ample opportunities in the future for hon. Members to express their opposition to the Bill. It is true that the Land Bill of 1881 occupied a great deal of time, but that may be partly owing to the fact that it was perfectly novel legislation; whereas the present measure is based on the lines of measures which have gone before it.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS: It is true an arrangement was arrived at, and I feel we are not entitled to expect an extension of the Debate. I, however, in the circumstances, make an *ad misericordiam* appeal to the Government for Friday afternoon. I do not think that would cause any inconvenience to hon. Members; and I would remind the First Lord of the Treasury that the speech of the right hon Gentleman, the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) has given the Debate a new turn, introducing, as it has done, many new considerations.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): Friday afternoon has been already fixed for the Allotments Bill, and therefore I hope the First Lord of the Treasury will not yield to the appeals made to him.

Dr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I go one step further than the hon. Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks), and invite the Government to take the whole of Friday. Many hon. Members who are totally opposed to the principles of Land Purchase have not yet had an opportunity of expressing their views.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): A great many Irish Members who wish to take part in the discussion have not yet spoken. I therefore hope the Government will give way on this very important point.

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 1st May, 1890.

LORD LOUTH.

Report made from the Lord Chancellor, that the right of Randal Pilgrim Ralph Plunkett, Baron of Louth, to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned during pleasure; and resumed by the Earl of Cork and Orrery.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Digby, after the death of his father.

COMPANIES (MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 67.)

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 1st May, 1890.

PETITION.

THE SALFORD GAS FRAUDS.

MR. E. HARDCASTLE (Salford, N.) presented a Petition from the inhabitants of Salford, praying for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the municipal contracts of that borough.

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask whether, under the Standing Orders of the House on Petitions relating to matters of personal grievance, urgent in character, discussion can arise on the Petition which has just been presented? The allegation is that there have been gross frauds at Salford, a man now being in gaol in connection with them, and that an endeavour is being made to compromise the fraud in behalf of people alleged to be parties to it by the payment of a large sum of money. It is felt that immediate action should be taken, in order to prevent a defeat of justice.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that this is a case which comes under Standing Order No. 20, which makes exception of instances of personal grievance. If the hon. Gentleman had presented a Petition from any person in gaol there would have been a distinct difference in the case. As I understand it, the case is one of a general grievance, which the hon. Member can take an early opportunity of bringing forward.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: The grievance is rather a personal one of the ratepayers, who have been defrauded of an enormous sum.

MR. SPEAKER: That is the very distinction to which I referred. The Standing Order makes exception in favour of personal grievances of such pressing urgency as to justify immediate Debate. The case which the hon. Member has brought forward is one of general grievance.

QUESTIONS.

BURY ST. EDMUNDS ASSIZES.

LORD ELCHO (Ipswich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what public advantage is gained by holding separate Assizes at Bury St. Edmunds, where there is no gaol accommodation; whether he is prepared to consider the advisability of doing away with these Assizes; whether, while the matter is under the consideration of the Government, he will, in order to prevent the repetition of cases of innocent men being taken backwards and forwards in chains between Ipswich and Bury, forbid absolutely the use of chains and irons in the conveyance of untried and tractable prisoners; and whether the practice of indiscriminately chaining untried prisoners together, and conveying them backwards and forwards from the gaol to the place of trial, prevails anywhere else in the United Kingdom?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): The question of holding Assizes for the County of Suffolk at Bury or elsewhere cannot be determined solely by the absence of gaol accommodation. There are many places where there is no prison and where, nevertheless, Assizes and Quarter Sessions are held. Before doing away with Bury Assizes the Government would require evidence that local opinion was in favour of the change, and that it would promote the convenience of Judges, magistrates, jurors, and witnesses in civil and criminal cases. So far as Prison Authorities are concerned, they would prefer an Assize town in which there was a prison, and I hope the Local Authorities will feel the necessity of providing accommodation for prisoners awaiting trial, so as to obviate the necessity of conveying them backwards and forwards. I am informed that there is no practice of indiscriminately chaining untried prisoners together. Old offenders and first offenders are carefully kept separate. I have more than once given instructions that handcuffs and chains are not to be used unless a prisoner is violent or an escape or rescue is apprehended. But throughout England the use of handcuffs and light chains in cases of necessity is permitted by the Prison Rules; and so long as Governors of prisons are criminally responsible for an escape they must be allowed some means of securing prisoners in places where they might easily run off. It has been considered in practice less conspicuous, less offensive, and more secure to handcuff one arm to the warder's arm than to have a warder holding each prisoner by the collar. I am quite of opinion that untried prisoners should be treated with as much consideration as is consistent with their safe custody.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION BILL.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Police Superannuation Bill will be introduced and in the hands of Members?

MR. MATTHEWS: The Bill is now in the hands of the Parliamentary draftsmen, and will be introduced as soon as possible.

CONDITION OF SOUTH COAST ROADS.

MR. THOMAS HENRY BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board whether he is aware that one of the principal coast roads in the South of England, at Lancing, in Sussex, has become, through incursions of the sea, impassible, to the great inconveniece of the public; and whether he will inquire into the matter, with the view of compelling those responsible for the maintenance of the road to restore the same to a proper state?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): I am aware that the coast road at Lancing has become, through incursions of the sea, impassible. This condition of things has, I believe, existed for some years. The Local Government Board have no powers under which they could determine the question as to the persons on whom any liability to re-instate the road may devolve, nor to compel the restoration of the road. The re-instatement of the road without sea-defences would, I believe, be of little service.

HULL GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther) if he can explain why the Charity Commissioners, having authorised the sale of the ground and buildings of the old Free Grammar School at Hull, and sanctioned the purchase of a piece of land, declaring by their order that it was to be used for the site of new school buildings, and having approved the plans of the new school to be erected from the proceeds of the sale of the old school, ultimately intimated they would not permit the new building to be proceeded with until the school was endowed, it having previously existed for 400 years without such endowment; whether it is the case that, under the present head master, who is conducting the school in temporary and inconvenient hired premises, the number of scholars has risen from 40 to nearly 200; and whether, under the circumstances, the Charity Commissioners will consider the desirability of providing better accommodation without delay?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The Charity Commissioners authorised the sale of the ground and buildings of the Old Free Grammar School at Hull, and sanctioned the purchase of a piece of land for a site, and approved plans for a new school, in the expectation, which failed through local opposition to be realised, of being enabled to provide an endowment for it from other charitable endowments in Hull. The Charity Commissioners have always declined to permit the whole endowment of the Free Grammar School to be absorbed in building, and the foundation to be re-organised under scheme without any endowment, in face of the competition which would arise from existing schools in the town, and from a new school to be shortly started upon the Hymers' Endowment of £50,000. The Charity Commissioners are quite prepared to consider the desirability of raising sufficient funds to provide better accommodation for the school.

CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, pending the re-organisation of the Civil Service in connection with the Ridley Commission, the usual examinations in the Lower Division of the Civil Service have been suspended since August, 1887; whether, on the Order in Council re-organising the Lower Division of the Civil Service being issued, it is now intended to hold an examination on 13th May; whether he is aware that many young men, who have spent a couple of years in preparation, will be a month or two over age at that date; and whether, considering that no notification was given that such an interval as two and a half or nearly three years would elapse before another examination should take place, such candidates will be allowed some extension of the maximum age at the forthcoming examination?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): It is true that there has been a suspension of open competitive examinations for Lower Division Clerkships since August, 1887; but both by answers to questions in this House and by advertisements in newspapers, candidates were warned some time ago that no date could be fixed for the next examination. The rule as to age is fixed by the Order in Council, and consequently cannot be varied at discretion in favour of individuals. The examinations were not suspended in connection with the Ridley Commission, but because there were no vacancies present or in the near future.

OFFICERS OF THE SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Treasury have refused to grant the Second Class officers of the Savings Bank Department more than 7 per cent. of their average salaries as compensation for 16 per cent. more work recently imposed upon them by the introduction of the seven hours working day in that Department; whether the then Lower Division clerks in that Department received 15 per cent. on their average salaries when the system was applied to them in January, 1889; whether the maximum salary of the Second Class has been increased £50 only, while that of the Lower Division has been increased by £150 since January, 1889; whether the Second Class officers referred to have had three times the length of service of the Lower Division, and are now engaged upon superior work; and whether, in view of the superior claims of the Second Class, he will consider whether some further compensation can be awarded them?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Member's question rests upon the fallacy that compensation for the extra hour is to be given on the same scale as the payment for the other six hours. The Royal Commission were doubtful whether any compensation for the extra hour was necessary for Classes above the Lower Division, and the same opinion was expressed in a Debate in this House. We have gone beyond the recommendations of the Royal Commission in granting an allowance for the extra hour in the Savings Bank Department, and we trust that the House will support us in refusing further demands.

THE POLICE BUILDINGS ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is responsible for the adoption of the design of Mr. N. Shaw, R.A., for the Police Buildings lately erected on the Thames Embankment; whether the Commissioners of Woods and Forests as Trustees of the Crown Lands on which these buildings have been erected, protested against the design, or made any representations with respect to it, and whether he will produce any correspondence on the subject which may have taken place; and why these designs, before being carried into execution, were not submitted for the inspection of the Members of both Houses of Parliament?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am responsible for the adoption of the designs for the Police Buildings on the Embankment. It is not the fact that the Commissioners of Woods and Forests protested against them. The designs were before the Office of Works and the Office of Woods for the purpose of satisfying them that the building did not infringe certain conditions considered necessary for the protection of adjoining Crown Land. They made no representation adverse to the designs. It has never been the practice to submit the designs of Police Buildings to the inspection of Members, and many other large public buildings have been erected without such inspection. The original designs, from which some variation has been made, were exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1887 and were favourably noticed in the Press. Having regard to the results of the most conspicuous recent instance of a competition in designs for a large public building, I preferred to select an eminent architect on whose artistic and practical knowledge full reliance could be placed. I cannot in the space of an answer argue the point whether the style is or is not out of harmony with surrounding buildings. Th design was submitted to, and sanctioned by me, and I consider it to be a successful solution of the difficult architectural problem of providing accommodation for a staff of some 300 persons upon a site limited in dimensions, and the building appears to me worthy of its site and its purpose.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: Is there no correspondence on the subject between the Home Office and the Office of Woods and Forests?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have stated the purport of the communication.

TREATMENT OF UNCONVICTED PRISONERS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the case of a boy named Robert Hood, an apprentice printer in Ayr, who was recently apprehended on a charge of assault, was marched through the public streets, handcuffed between two policemen, to Ayr Prison, and, on arrival there, was stripped of his own clothes, forced into a cold bath, compelled to assume the prison garb, given oakum to pick, and eventually was brought before the Sheriff to emit his declaration clad in the prison dress; and whether it is consistent with the regulations of Her Majesty's Prisons that an untried, unconvicted prisoner, who may be proved innocent of the charge against him, should be subjected to such treatment?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The facts of this case are materially different from those indicated in the question. There being reasonable ground for apprehending an escape, the constables secured the wrists of the accused, but not with handcuffs. When Hood came to the prison he was supplied with a warm bath and clean clothes, which are set apart for untried prisoners, and he availed himself of these. He was told that he might either work or not as he liked, but that if he chose to work he would be credited with marks, which meant money on going out, and he preferred working. When he went before the Sheriff he did so in the clean clothes, going and returning by a private passage. He was in the prison for only five hours. His treatment while in prison was consistent with the regulations.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is the intention of the Government to issue an Order in Council to give effect to Clause 29 of the Treasury Minute of the 10th August, 1889, which recommends the creation of a class of "special *employés* of an order lower than the Second Division," or "persons of the class of Statistical Abstracters;" and, if so, whether he can state when such Order in Council will probably be promulgated; and whether it is contemplated to promote meritorious writers of long service to the class referred to?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The Treasury do not consider it necessary to issue an Order in Council creating a general class of *employés* of an order lower than the Second Division. If the Head of a Department considers that a part of the work of his Department ought to be done by such a class of *employés*, the Treasury will consider the point with him. The question, therefore, as to the promotion of copyists into such a class has not arisen.

THE HORSLEY-ON-TYNE POST OFFICE.

MR. MAC INNES (Northumberland, Hexham): I beg to ask the Postmaster General for what public advantage the business of the Post Office at Horsley-on-Tyne has been removed from the place where it has been conducted for many years to the satisfaction of the neighbourhood?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In consequence of the resignation of the Sub-Postmaster at Horsley, the Post Office in that village has been removed to his successor's premises. I am not aware that the removal has caused any public inconvenience.

CIVIL SERVICE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS.

MR. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that during the last three years no open competitive examinations for the Lower Division of the Civil Service have been held, and that on this account all Civil Service writers under 25 years of age have during such period been debarred from entering such Division by examination, arrangements will be made for the admission of such of the writers into the Second Division as may have been so debarred?

MR. JACKSON: The Official Regulations limit the age up to which copyists can compete for Second Division Clerkships to 25, or 5 years beyond the age fixed for ordinary competition, and the Treasury do not consider that they can extend the limit.

LORD LIEUTENANT OF GLAMORGANSHIRE.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state when the appointment of the Lord Lieutenant of Glamorganshire will be made.

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Prime Minister that the appointment will be made in the course of next week.

THE INHABITED HOUSE DUTY.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it be true, as seems to be understood by some tax-collectors in the country, that when a householder occupies two adjoining tenements which communicate, and of which the joint rental exceeds £60, whilst each of the rentals, taken separately, would qualify for a reduction, he will be deprived of any reduction under the proposed alteration in the Inhabited House Duty, and will have to pay the whole rate of duty; and, in the affirmative case, will he take steps to remedy the alleged grievance?

MR. GOSCHEN: Under the existing law two tenements in one occupation with inter-communication are chargeable as one house, and the reduction in the duty would make no difference in this respect. I cannot admit that there is a grievance, as practically the householder in question is occupying premises of which the rental exceeds £60.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE AT BALAKLAVA.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state if it is a fact, as reported, that more than 30 men who took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava are now in absolute want; if so, whether any steps have been or will be taken to afford them some relief; and if any balance remains out of the Patriotic Fund, or if there is any other fund applicable to such a purpose?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have no information in my possession which will enable me to say whether the fact quoted by my hon.

Friend is correct, though I am making some inquiry into it. I have considered whether the Government will be justified in proposing to provide any special pension for these men. But at present I see this difficulty: that it is almost impossible to draw any hard and fast line between the survivors of the Light Brigade in this ever memorable Charge and the men who performed the duties assigned to them with great gallantry and even more hardships in the trenches before Sebastopol, or in some of the stirring incidents of the Indian Mutiny. I understand that this case is being met by a public subscription; but the House will, I am sure, agree with me that in one way or another any proved destitution in this case ought to be relieved.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that no fewer than six of the survivors of the Light Cavalry Charge are at present inmates of workhouses in England?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I have seen that statement in the newspapers; but I am not aware whether it is true or not.

MR. NORRIS: I will call attention to the subject on the Estimates.

MARRIAGES IN MALTA.

MR. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the communication appearing in the *Malta Gazette*, of the 27th March last, under the name of General Sir John Lintorn Simmons, Her Majesty's recent Plenipotentiary to the Papal See, indicating the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce a project of law in the Council of Government in Malta, to invalidate all marriages between contracting parties one of whom is a Roman Catholic and the other not so, which are not celebrated according to the form established by the Council of Trent, whether the issue of such marriages will be held in the legal sense to be illegitimate, and whether such regulations will come into force before the British Parliament has had an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the matter; whether one of the provisions of the Protocol between Sir John Lintorn Simmons and the Papal See is to extend this law in its application to all Her Majesty's subjects in Her African Possessions; and, if such be the case, will Parliament be permitted to review such provision before its final ratification; and whether he has any objection to submit to the House the substance of the concessions made by these Protocols to the Papal See?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): (1) The present law of Malta (which is the Canon Law) will be in no way altered by the proposed Bill as to marriages in which one or both parties is a Catholic; but, whereas it is believed that the present law throws doubts on the validity of marriages in which neither party is a Catholic and not celebrated according to the Decrees of the Council of Trent, the proposed Bill will remove those doubts and make the marriages absolutely valid. (2) There is no such provision in the Protocol. (3) Papers showing the arrangements made with the Papal See will be presented when the instrument is in complete form.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table a copy of the despatch of Sir Lintorn Simmons in reference to the validity of these marriages in Malta?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I must ask the right hon. Gentleman to repeat that question.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, as the Board have struck out at the instance of Local Authorities Clause 6 of the Board's Model Order prohibiting a supply of electricity beyond the area of supply, he is prepared to make a similar concession to Electric Lighting Companies; and whether he will grant to companies the same concession, namely, an appeal to the Board of Trade in the matter of compulsory works, which the Board made to Local Authorities at their recent interview with the officials of the Board of Trade on the 24th of April last?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): My answer to the first inquiry must be in the negative, seeing that the position of a company limited to an area, and possibly with other companies in adjoining areas, is distinct from that of a Local Authority having jurisdiction over their own local district, even though this should be larger than their area of supply." As regards the second inquiry, I am prepared to treat companies and Local Authorities alike.

COLLECTORS OF INLAND REVENUE.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the regulations allowing assistance in the offices of the Collectors of Inland Revenue during the absence on leave of clerks has been withdrawn; if representations have been made by collectors of their inability to grant the whole of the annual leave to clerks, more especially where the staff consists of three clerks only; and what provision it is proposed to make so that the annual leave allowed under the regulations may not be lost to such clerks?

Mr. JACKSON: I am informed that in consequence of the re-arrangement of the business in collectors' offices, with a view to the increase of the salaries of clerks, the practice of allowing assistance when clerks where on private leave was discontinued, and the regulations relative to all officicals in Somerset House extended to the country offices. In a few instances representations have been made to the Board on the matter of leave to clerks; but they consider that, with proper arrangement, in the respective offices, all clerks may obtain their leave within each official year. There does not appear to be any necessity to alter the existing regulations.

THE HOUSE DUTY.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, for considerations of public policy, he will remit the House Duty upon Fire Brigade Stations, which are occupied as barracks by the firemen, and as stabling for the horses, engines, and appliances?

Mr. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member's question, I think, involves the delicate relations of Imperial and of local finance, and I am not sure how far such a concession would carry me. As I stated the other day, the inevitable effect of remissions of House Duty in one quarter is to lead to further claims for exemption in another. At the same time, if the case of the Fire Brigade Station is an isolated one, I do not say that it could not be taken into consideration.

THE VOLUNTEER DRILL HALL IN COLCHESTER.

Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what annual contribution is made by the Government towards the maintenance of the Volunteer Drill Hall at Colchester, and to whom is it paid; and whether the hall is available for public and political meetings without distinction of Party; and, if so, upon what terms?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: No direct contribution to the Drill Hall at Colchester is made by the War Office; but the Volunteers there receive the usual capitation allowances. The use to be made of the Hall is within the discretion of the commanding officer.

CUSTOMS' OFFICERS.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is intended that the inquiry into the position, duties, and grievances of the officers of the Out-door Department of Her Majesty's Customs shall include the duties and position of the boatmen or watermen employed in the Customs?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; it is intended to include the case of the boatmen in the inquiry, and so they would have been informed if they had applied for information direct, instead of seeking it through that political intervention which I always deplore.

CRETE.

Mr. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been drawn to a further telegram in the *Manchester Guardian* of the 29th instant, dated Canea, Saturday last, that the

> "Officer Hassan Bey, who outraged the girl Marie Damanaki, has been arrested, but Chakir Pasha is endeavouring to screen him by pretending that the girl has changed her religion;"

and whether Her Majesty's Government will use their influence to prevent such a miscarriage of justice?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: We have no reason to believe that the inquiry will not be fairly conducted. Should there be any probability of a failure of justice Her Majesty's Consul will, no doubt, report.

COLONIAL GOVERNMENT SECURITIES.

MR. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has now considered the question of permitting Trustees to invest their Trust Funds in Colonial Government Securities; and, if so, what conclusion has he arrived at?

*MR. GOSCHEN: A Departmental Committee, as I think the House is aware, was appointed to consider how the difficulties connected with the admission of Colonial Stocks into the category of trust investments might best be surmounted, in the event of its being thought desirable to take steps to provide for their admission. The Report of the Committee has been presented to the Treasury, but I have not yet had time to consider their conclusions.

MURDER AND SUICIDE.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the number of murders as reported in the Press, committed during the present year followed by the suicide or attempt at suicide of the persons who committed the acts; and are any records kept from which statistical information as to the murders, homicides, and suicides, committed by lunatics, and not included in the Judicial Statistics, such as the tables given for 1885, p 81, can be obtained; and if so, will he lay a Return on the Table.

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Lunacy Commissioners that the number of suicides in institutions for the insane amongst single patients is returned by them in Appendix B2 of their 43rd Report, and has been given in former years; but that they know of no record (other than the Judicial Statistics), of homicides and suicides by lunatics not under care and control.

ASSESSMENT OF LODGING HOUSES.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will submit to the House, in a definite form, his proposals for placing lodging houses on an equality with hotels as regards assessment to Inhabited House Duty, and from what date this alteration in the incidence of the duty is to take effect?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The new proposals as regards lodging houses are contained generally in the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill. The Inland Revenue Department will lose no time in framing such Regulations as may be necessary to give effect to these proposals, and they will be known long before the next assessment of the Inhabited House Duty takes place.

RABID DOGS.

MR. FARQUHARSON (Dorset, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether his attention has been called to the Report of the Executive Committee of the London County Council for the quarter ending March 31st last, which states that the number of rabid dogs for the quarter is seven as against two in the corresponding quarter of last year; whether the alleged general increase of rabies in scheduled districts has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the cases of hydrophobia; in how many, if any, of the alleged outbreaks of rabies relied in by the Board of Agriculture, in justifying the Muzzling Order, was the alleged rabid dog under the observation of a veterinary surgeon of experience while still living; whether the remuneration of veterinary surgeons employed by the Board depends in any way upon the number of dogs declared rabid; and whether, owing to to the increase of rabies in the scheduled districts, he can hold out any hopes of withdrawing the Muzzling Order?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question.

MURDERS IN GREECE.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to a telegram from Athens of Monday last, 28th April, which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 29th April, to the following effect:—

> "On the 24th and 26th instant two Christians were killed at Casneliani and Chara, in the district of Monofasti. The murder at Chara is ascertained to have been committed by Turks;"

and if he will ascertain the truth of the truth of these detailed allegations, and, in case they prove to be true, take all possible steps in his power to cause the guilty parties to be brought to justice and punished for their crimes?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: These particular crimes have not yet been reported to the Foreign Office; but murders of both Christians and Mussulmans are, unfortunately, of common occurrence. Her Majesty's Consul has standing orders to exert himself in the interests of justice.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK CLERKS.

Mr. CAUSTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will state the average length of service and salary, and the maximum of the (then) Lower Division in the Post Office Savings Bank prior to the introduction of a seven hours' working day for this body in January, 1889; whether he will also state the average length of service and salary and the maximum of the Second Class officers of the old establishment who have recently been ordered to work seven hours a day; whether both these bodies have been placed in the new Second Division of the Service with a maximum of £350 per annum, the immediate compensation for the seventh hour being in both cases £15 per annum; whether he will grant some increased compensation to the Second Class, who have only received six per cent. of their average salaries for 16 per cent. more work, while the Lower Division have received 14 per cent.; and whether the Second Class have been and are engaged on superior work to that of the Lower Division clerks, their juniors in the office?

*Mr. RAIKES: I can easily state the average length of service and salary of the two bodies of officers referred to by the hon. Member on a given date—say, the 31st of December, 1888. The first body of officers mentioned in the question had, on that date, an average length of service of five years, with an average salary of £113. The average length of service of the second body was 19 years, with an average salary of £261. Care was, however, taken in placing the officers of these two bodies on the new Second Division, to place them at the proper points of the new scales of salary, and to give to them the proper increment to which in each case they were entitled, so that so far from losing, they have all gained by the change which has taken place. No further compensation will be granted to either body, and it is obvious that the seniors were necessarily employed on higher work than their juniors.

COUNTY COURT REGISTRARS.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS: I beg to ask the Attorney General if he can inform the House how many Registrars of County Courts reside within the district of their Courts, as required by Section 25 of "The County Courts Act, 1888"; and whether steps are being taken to enforce the provisions of that section in the case or Registrars not so residing?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. Webster, Isle of Wight): I am informed that out of 500 Registrars of the County Courts, 471 either reside in their districts or have their places of business as practising solicitors in the Court towns. Of the remaining 29, five were appointed before the year 1850, 12 are Registrars of Metropolitan County Courts, and three have only just been appointed, and will reside within their districts. As to the remaining nine I have no information. In April, 1888, after the passing of the County Courts Consolidation Act the Lord Chancellor brought to the notice of all the County Court Judges, with whom the appointment of Registrar rests, the provisions as to residence, and his attention has not been called to any case since the County Courts Act, 1888, came into operation.

CHARGE AGAINST AN IRISH MAGISTRATE.

Mr. O'HANLON: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether complaints have reached him that a certain Magistrate, who holds a commission of the peace for Londonderry City, at the last Assize Court, requested jurors to make a certain judgment in a case before the Court, and during the case; and whether, if this be proved to be a fact, he will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter?

Mr. MADDEN: No complaint of the kind has reached the Irish Government.

THE BERLIN LABOUR CONFERENCE.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what action the Government propose to take in order to carry out the recommendations of the Berlin Labour Conference; and whether the House will have an opportunity of discussing the resolutions come to by the Conference?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The resolutions of the Berlin Labour Conference are now under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, and will be laid on the Table of the House without any unnecessary delay. Her Majesty's Government are not yet prepared to specify the particular measures which they may hereafter propose for the consideration of Parliament on the subject. If the hon. Member desires to raise a discussion on the resolutions of the Conference he can do so by the ordinary Parliamentary means.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): In presenting the resolutions will the Government also lay upon the Table the proceedings of the Conference?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I apprehend that the usual course in regard to Papers of this character will be taken, and that Papers will be presented in the ordinary course.

RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES IN INDIA.

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he can lay upon the Table of the House the substance of any Reports received during the last 10 years from officers in charge of districts in India regarding conflicts on the subject of cow-killing or similar religious differences between Hindoos and Mahomedans?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No, Sir; there are no special Reports made upon conflicts arising from religious differences in India; and such a Return as that asked for is, therefore, impracticable.

LEPROSY IN UPPER BURMA.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is a fact, as stated by the Press, "that the prevalence of leprosy in Upper Burma is attracting some attention"; and, if such is the case, whether any practicable steps can be taken by the authorities to prevent its spreading into other parts of Burma?

*SIR J. GORST: No information has reached the Secretary of State about the prevalence of leprosy in Upper Burma; but he is aware that proposals have been made for establishing, with Government aid, a lepers' home at Mandalay. When the Leper Bill now before the Indian Legislature becomes law, it will become possible to segregate lepers in Upper Burma and for Local Bodies to assign funds for the maintenance of lepers.

THE TELEGRAPH UNION STAFF.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General why any difference is made in the sick pay of the commercial and engineering branches of the Telegraph Union Staff, the former being two-thirds and the latter one-half; whether the difference made between the London and Provincial branches of the commercial staff is on account of the cost of living, and, if so, why it does not apply also to the engineering branch; and whether he can explain why, while Inspectors have received two increments of pay during the last two years, first £50, then £30, per annum, with a year's back pay, the foremen have only received 2s. per week increment, and the linemen nothing at all since their transfer to the Public Service.

*MR. RAIKES: The whole question of the payment of servants of the Post Office during their absence on account of sickness is now under consideration and I trust that it may be possible to arrive at an early decision. The hon. Member is under a misapprehension in supposing that the Inspectors have had their scale of pay increased twice during the last two years, and that the foremen and linemen have derived so little benefit from their transfer to the Public Service; but I may explain that whilst the duties of the latter officers have scarcely changed at all, those of the former have become much more important.

EXCISE LICENCES IN CORK.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether the fine of Thomas Corbett, who was convicted on the 3rd of March at Ballymartle Petty Sessions, County Cork, of having a revolver without an Excise licence, was paid by his master, Mr. J. B. Coughlan, a local Magistrate; whether the Magistrate forwarded a recommendation to the Lord Lieutenant that the fine should be reduced; whether he is aware that evidence was given that Corbett had fired off his revolver while standing in the door of a public house, and also on the public road; whether he is aware that the District Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary stated that Corbett was one of the worst characters in the district; has his fine been reduced; on what grounds has no prosecution been instituted against Corbett; and whether Corbett's licence to carry arms will be continued?

MR. MADDEN: The reply to the inquiry in the first, second, and fifth paragraphs is in the affirmative. (3) I understand that the evidence was not gone into, the man having pleaded guilty. (4) The District Inspector reports that the statement he made was not that the man was one of the worst characters in the district, but that he was reckless when under the influence of drink. (6) No additional prosecution was instituted against the man, as, in the opinion of the Local Authorities, the prosecution under the Gun Licensing Act would meet the requirements of the case. (7) The man has ceased to be in the employment of Mr. Coghlan, and no longer holds a licence to have or carry arms.

THE LEDGFIELD LUNATIC ASYLUM.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the following paragraph in the *Daily News* of the 28th April, 1890, with reference to the Report of the Commissioners of Lunacy on the subject of the ill-treatment of patients in the Ledgfield Lunatic Asylum:—

> "These officials state that they were satisfied that three attendants were guilty of ill-treatment to patients under their charge, and they declare that dismissal, with a month's wages in lieu of notice, was utterly disproportionate to the offence;"

can he say when the offence was committed; what is the date of the Commissioners' Report to which reference is made; what was the nature of the injuries inflicted on the patients; did the patients die; and why were not steps taken to bring the attendants to justice, and is it too late now to do so.

*MR. MATTHEWS: The ill-treatment was alleged to have taken place on several occasions prior to 3rd January this year. The paragraph is based on an entry made by the Visiting Commissioners in the book of the Durham County Asylum of the 13th February. No patient died, and no steps were taken to bring the offenders to justice, as the Visiting Commissioners did not consider that sufficient evidence was forthcoming to justify proceedings being taken.

LUNATIC PATIENTS.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether all persons having charge of single patients alleged to be mentally affected are bound by the Act of 1889 to transmit all letters of such patients to the Home Office unopened; and whether it is the custom to reply to or acknowledge the receipt of such letters; and, if not, what guarantee have the writers that the requirements of the Act are observed or how are they to know whether their communications have or have not been forwarded?

*MR. MATTHEWS: The duty of forwarding such letters unopened to a Secretary of State is laid down by Section 41 of the Lunacy Act, 1890. It is not the custom for the Secretary of State to reply officially to such letters. When a letter is received from any lunatic which is tolerably coherent it is at once referred to the Commissioners in Lunacy for special inquiry and report, and the action which is taken thereupon by the Commissioners is held to be a sufficient answer to the letter of the patient and a sufficient guarantee that his complaints have been attended to.

THE POSTMASTERSHIP OF WATERFORD.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the occasion of the present vacancy for a Postmaster at Waterford will be taken advantage of to create a flow of promotion amongst the class of Postmasters in Ireland, who are not usually given other outside appointments, in the same manner as was lately carried out in England and Scotland?

*MR. RAIKES: I shall be very glad if I find among the candidates recommended to me the name of an Irish Postmaster whom I can promote to be Postmaster of Waterford. The mode suggested in the hon. Member's question has recommended itself to me in several cases; and he may rest assured that the question whether it should or should not be adopted also in the present case will be distinctly before me when the vacancy at Waterford comes to be filled.

THE LABOURERS' DWELLINGS ACTS.

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, having regard to the great and increasing interest taken by the class of agricultural labourers in Ireland in the question of the Amendment to the Labourers' Dwellings Acts, the Government will consider the propriety of introducing Amendments to the Irish Land Bill, when it reaches the Committee stage, to provide that all tenants who become purchasers of their holdings under the Bill shall be bound to make due provision for the proper housing of the labourers working upon such holdings.

MR. MADDEN: As my hon. Friend is aware, there is provision made in the Purchase Bill for giving to labourers in Ireland certain benefits in localities where the Guardians have not taken advantage of the Labourers' Dwellings Act. I may say, on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, that he will, of course, be glad to consider in Committee any proposals which may carry out more effectually the objects aimed at by that part of the Land Purchase Bill which deals with labourers' cottages.

RENT REDUCTIONS IN WESTMEATH.

MR. TUITE: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether he has received a copy of a resolution adopted unanimously by the Mullingar Board of Guardians on the 3rd instant, and published in the *Westmeath Examiner* of the 4th instant, complaining of the insufficient reductions in rent given by the Westmeath Sub-Commission at their recent sittings in Mullingar; and whether, considering the dissatisfaction and discontent which such decisions have produced, he will, in the interests of peace and order, consider the desirability of transferring some of the other Sub-Commissions to the county?

MR. MADDEN: A copy of the resolution mentioned was received. If the parties are dissatisfied with the decision referred to they can appeal. It would not be proper for the Government to issue directions to the Court of the Irish Land Commission upon complaints made by either landlords or tenants, with reference to any decisions of Assistant Commissioners upon their cases.

DUNDRUM LUNATIC ASYLUM.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether it is a fact that the police were called in to quell a disturbance in the Criminal Lunatic Asylum, Dundrum, on the 27th April; whether this is the first time the police were called on to act in the Asylum; what was the origin of the outbreak; and will any inquiry be made into the management of this Institution?

MR. MADDEN: The reply to the inquiry in the first paragraph is in the affirmative, to that in the second paragraph in the negative. The origin of the disturbance was the withdrawal of certain extras. The Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums have already arranged to inquire generally into this Institution at an early date.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): By whose authority were the police called in?

MR. MADDEN: I cannot tell.

DR. TANNER: Was it by order of the Magistrates, or otherwise?

MR. MADDEN: The hon. Member had better give notice of the question.

DESTRUCTION OF WOODS IN IRELAND.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland if his attention has been called to a Judgment of Mr. Commissioner M'Carthy in the Land Purchase Court last week, in which he strongly deprecated the destruction of ancient woods by landlords who have sold their estates under Lord Ashbourne's Act; and if the Government will introduce any measure debarring landowners who sell under the Ashbourne Act from devastating the localities in which such properties are situated as referred to in the Judgment of the learned Commissioner?

MR. MADDEN: The Government are fully alive to the importance of the subject. So far as their information goes the greatest part of the injury is due to the actions of the purchasers. The Government will gladly consider any practical suggestion which may be made for dealing with the question.

DERRY GAOL.

MR. O'HANLON: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland if he can explain why Derry Gaol has been for several months, and is still, without a Catholic chaplain; whether prisoners committed for a term over one month have been sent to Belfast, a distance of 100 miles; whether policemen are taken off their other business to go this long journey; and whether he will state the cost of policemen in connection with this duty since the order was made, and the cost connected with the prisoners for the same period?

MR. MADDEN: With reference to the inquiries in the first two paragraphs, I beg to refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the question on this subject put by the hon. Member for South Donegal on 17th February. (3) The prisoners are conveyed under police escort. It is part of the duty of the police to act as escorts on such occasions. (4) The General Prisons Board are at present unable to afford the information indicated in the last paragraph, as they have not yet received from the Constabulary their claims for the period named.

LIGHT RAILWAYS IN IRELAND.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, in considering the merits of the various lines of railway suggested to be made under the Light Railways Act of last Session, the attention of the Lord Lieutenant in Council was called to the following passage in the Report of the Royal Commission on Irish Public Works (page 50):—

> "In the County of Kilkenny is a district which, in the opinion of practical and professional men, contains a large store of coal known to be useful for many, though not all, of the purposes for which English and Welsh coal is used. This coalfield is already worked to an appreciable extent for local purposes; but though within 10 to 20 miles of three lines of railway, has never been opened up by a branch line."

and whether the development of such an industry was one of the main objects of the Act of last Session; and, if so, whether he will suggest to the Lord Lieutenant the advisability of favourably considering the claims of the industry and district in question, in scheduling any further Light Railway schemes?

MR. MADDEN: The Lord Lieutenant in Council had its attention called to the reference made by the Royal Commissioners in their Report to complaints made to them in the terms quoted in the question. As already stated, in reply to previous questions, it would be premature to consider any further proposals for light railways until the cases of the schemes already scheduled have been finally disposed of.

THE CASE OF THE "QUEEN *v.* RYE."

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland if it is a fact that Mr. Harold, J.P., of Crookstown, was requested or advised by authority not to adjudicate in the recent case at Crookstown, County Cork, of the Queen *v.* Rye?

MR. MADDEN: I am informed that Mr. Harold voluntarily refused to adjudicate upon the case.

DR. TANNER: May I ask whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman proposes to change the venue from the County of Cork in order to afford some chance for a true bill to be found?

Mr. MADDEN: I cannot say at present what course will be taken.

Dr. TANNER: Is it not the fact that Mr. Howard has been called upon to appear in Court and produce all the letters and telegrams which have passed between himself and me in his capacity as one of my constituents?

Mr. MADDEN: I cannot say whether that is so or not.

Dr. TANNER: Am I to understand that the Chief Law Officer of the Crown in Ireland is not aware that a summons has been served on this gentleman to produce these documents?

Mr. MADDEN: The hon. Gentleman must not understand anything of the kind.

Dr. TANNER: Then I beg to ask, Sir——

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order!

Dr. TANNER: It is a question of privilege.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order!

THE SHANNON DRAINAGE WORKS.

Mr. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, in view of the large sums of money already expended in the Shannon Drainage Works, which have produced no visible beneficial result, and in consideration of the widespread dissatisfaction and anxiety that prevails in the district amongst all classes of the ratepayers, as evidenced by such resolutions as that passed by the Grand Jury at the last Nenagh Assizes on the subject, he will consent to a Parliamentary inquiry into the whole project in relation to the fishery interests involved?

Mr. MADDEN: I must ask the hon. Member to postpone this and the two other questions upon the same subject which appears in his name.

REALTY IN IRELAND.

Mr. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been directed to the circumstance that the realty of England, Wales, and Scotland has rapidly risen in value, especially during the last 20 years, and is still rising, whilst the taxable basis of local taxation have remained stationary, and are 50 per cent. under present actual values; that the realty of Ireland is diminishing in value to the extent that the Irish taxable basis is now higher than actual values, as determined by the Irish Land Commission tribunals; whether the incidence of local taxation in Ireland is at present relatively heavier than that of those other kingdoms or divisions of the United Kingdom; and whether, in view of the above and of the proposed syndication of the local taxes of Ireland, or portion thereof, under the provisions of the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill, Her Majesty's Government are prepared to re-adjust such unequal incidence of local taxation by establishing an uniform taxable basis and uniform rating thereunder throughout the United Kingdom, or by correlative Imperial contributions in aid or otherwise, before such provisions shall become operative, or to grant an inquiry whether such proposed asset of hypothecation is a fair and equal burden upon Ireland for such purpose?

***Mr. GOSCHEN**: The hon. Member has kindly given me private notice of his question; and I think he will be satisfied that the points he raises could be better dealt with in Committee on the Irish Land Purchase Bill than in an answer to a question across the floor of the House.

MR GEORGE SANDS.

Mr. CLANCY: I wish to ask the Chief Secretary whether an inquiry is being made as to the charges against Mr. George Sands; if so, where it is being held and who is holding it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I think the hon. Member had better give notice of the question.

THE LICENSING BILL.

***Sir W. LAWSON** (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I wish to know from the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Bill dealing with licences is already printed?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: It is printed, and I believe that it will be circulated to-morrow.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

Mr. Bolitho for one week, on account of urgent private affairs.—(*Mr. Anstruther.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Eighth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXCEPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Ordered—

"That the proceedings on the Second Reading of the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill, if under discussion at at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order, Sittings of the House."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 199.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [21st April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and, at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months.—" (*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*(4.20.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR): Mr. Speaker, no doubt there are speakers of weight and authority in the House who have still to address us against the Bill which we are now engaged in discussing; but I suppose I am not wrong in assuming that during the course of the three days' Debate we have had on this subject the main lines of attack have developed themselves. We have had three speakers from the Front Opposition Bench, including the leader of the Opposition; we have had a speech from the leader of the Nationalist Party in this House; and we have had a speech from a gentleman of an authority among hon. Members below the Gangway second only to that of the hon. Member for Cork—I mean the hon. Member for East Mayo. We have had, besides, utterance given to the views of that section of the Radical Party which is represented by the senior Member for Northampton. I presume, therefore, we are in possession of the general objections which are taken on the other side of the House to the measure which it has been my duty to bring forward. I think it will be admitted by all those who have followed the Debate closely, as I have had to do, that the attack upon this Bill, though often violent in form, has in reality been rather hesitating in substance. These who used apparently the most decisive and vigorous language against the proposals of the Government seemed themselves to be more or less hampered by the feeling that this Bill is in accordance with the best traditions of every Party in this House, and that they themselves probably had been parties to recommending proposals not based on fundamentally or radically different lines, and that possibly, in obeying the natural instinct of an Opposition which is to oppose whatever the Government may bring forward, they may not have been pursuing the best interests of that portion of the United Kingdom whose welfare I am sure they have at heart. One speaker indeed there was quite undisturbed by inconvenient reminiscences. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby pounded away at this Bill for two hours the other night without apparently recollecting that he was a party to a measure open to all the most vital objections which he brought forward with such force and ability. I am well aware that in the view of the right hon. Gentleman the general history of the Liberal Party is a blank between the Union and the year 1885; apparently in the matter of Land Purchase the blank continues till the summer of 1886. He entirely ignores—he never said one word to suggest that he had the slightest recollection of the proposal to which he was a party only three years ago. Now, Sir, it would be very easy to drag up previous speeches of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite as ample proof of the merits of this Bill, and of their inconsistency in opposing it. It would require far less industry than some of them have devoted to exhume the obscure placards and election addresses of certain friends of mine on this side of the House. Hon. Gentlemen opposite now seem to regard it as in no way embarrassing to have their previous utterances quoted against them. Custom has hardened them to that operation. But they apparently still credit us with

sufficient regard for consistency to be annoyed by any apparent proof that it is absent. I notice, indeed, that even the most industrious among hon. Gentlemen opposite have not been able to extract anything from my speeches to serve their turn, though I have no doubt they have devoted special efforts to that branch of research, and I presume, therefore, I, at all events, cannot be charged with departing in any way from a policy which I have consistently advocated for the last 10 years. I shall not waste the time of the House by accumulating proof on proof from these old speeches of the discrepancy which exists between the present attitude and the former professions of the opponents of this Bill; it is sufficient that I should deal with the speeches that have been made during the last three days. I think it will be admitted that those speeches were made from a very remarkable variety of points of view. One hon. Member who made a maiden speech—and a very good speech it seemed to me to be—against this Bill, the other night, appeared to think that the fact that the attacks have been made upon the Bill from such a variety of quarters was a reflection, not upon the assailants but upon the assailed. That would be true if all those attacks were mutually self-supporting, but it is not true if those attacks be, as they certainly are, mutually destructive. If the objections urged by the right hon. Gentleman on the Bench opposite do not supplement but contradict the objections of hon. Members below the Gangway, that does not show that the Bill is bad, but that the opposition is disorganised. And I venture to think that it is far more conclusively proved by this Debate that the opposition is disorganised than that the Bill is open to serious criticism. The right hon. Member for Derby and the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division, who have spoken with all the authority of the regular Opposition, asked why a Bill of this kind was not to be extended to England and Scotland, while the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and the hon. Member for Cork, and every representative politician on the other side of the House, have always maintained that the position of the Irish land question is so peculiar, and that its

peculiarity arises so directly from historical causes for which this country is more or less responsible, that the case of Ireland must be dealt with on an entirely different basis from that of England and Scotland. Again, the right hon. Member for Derby said that he had always objected to making the annuity of the purchasing tenant less than the fair rent. How he could say that when he must have had in his mind the provisions of the Bill of 1886, which lowered the fair rent of every tenant in Ireland by 20 per cent., I cannot imagine. The same right hon. Gentleman told us that it was absurd to describe the purchasing tenants under our Bill as owners in any sense of the word. Why, they have been described in this Debate by the hon. Member for Cork and they have been always regarded by everyone else as owners in fact as well as in law; and if the circumstances of having to pay an annuity deprives an occupier of that title, then every proposal for encouraging peasant proprietorship in Ireland from 1869 downward has been founded on a delusion. The right hon. Gentleman told us that the boon to the buyers under the present Bill would be so great and would excite such jealousy among the tenants of neighbouring landlords who declined to sell that a state of disorder will be produced more formidable than that to which this Bill was designed to put an end to. But, on the other hand, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian told us that the Bill is so contrived that the whole of the boon proposed to be given to the tenants will be absorbed by the landlords. I ask, how are these two contradictory statements to be reconciled? If the landowner is to get all the benefit there will be no jealously between the occupying buyers and the tenants who do not buy. If, on the other hand, there is jealousy between the purchasing and the non-purchasing tenants, that proves that the landlords have not absorbed the advantages designed for the tenants under the Bill. Again, the right hon. Member for Derby has expressed his deliberate objection to hypothecating local rates to any purpose of land purchase in Ireland.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): Without consent.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: But the hon. Member for Cork based the whole of his speech upon the theory that local rates supplied the one security on which the Imperial funds necessary for land reform in Ireland could be borrowed. Again, hon. Members on the opposite Bench have expressed their objection to make the State the landlord of tenants in Ireland, and they have especially expressed their objection to making the State landlords of these small tenancies, where possibly difficulties of payment are more likely to occur. But in direct contradiction to this there is the scheme that was urged upon our attention by the hon. Member for East Mayo, who wanted the whole of the congested districts in Ireland compulsorily bought out, and contended that the State should become the universal landlord in the West of Ireland.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I am unwilling to interrupt the right hon. Gentlemen, but I desire to say that I expressed my conviction that you would undergo considerable risk in that case.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct; that is exactly what I understood him to say, and I want the House to notice the differences of principle which exist between the hon. Member and his friends on the one hand, and the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and his friends on the other, and also to note that all these contradictions, which are not superficial inconsistencies, go to the very root of land legislation. Yet these are the views uttered by right hon. Gentlemen who are never weary of telling us that we ought to base our whole policy upon the opinions of the Representatives of Ireland who sit below the Gangway. I venture most humbly to suggest to right hon. Members opposite, that before they lecture us for not consulting Irish opinion, they should make themselves acquainted with that opinion, and in obedience to their own principles frame their recommendations upon what they learn from the authoritative mouthpieces of public opinion in the South and West of Ireland. Now, Sir, I think I ought at this stage to deal with what the leader of the Irish Party called his alternative proposal to our scheme of land purchase. I shall not touch upon the details of that proposal, because I do not think they were very carefully thought out by the hon. Member, and in any case were criticised with great ability by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. Let me, however, make this observation. I never have been hostile to—on the contrary, I approve—the system of fining down rents, and I myself would have introduced clauses into this Bill on the subject if I had not been afraid of overweighting a measure, which is already almost too gigantic as it stands. But consider what invectives would have fallen upon my unhappy head if I had brought forward as an important or essential part of this Bill the scheme which has been laid before us by the hon. Member for Cork. In that case the speeches which would have been made against my Bill would have been far more effective than those which have been made against it as it stands, for the orator would have had something to say. I should have been told, and told truly, that while I was pledging English credit, that while I was compelling the State to collect the rents of Irish tenants, that while I was hypothecating the local funds of Ireland, that while, in the phrase of the Member for Newcastle, I was risking the danger of allowing lunatics to run loose throughout the length and breadth of the land, I was doing so not in order to establish peasant proprietorship, but to diminish rents, and that, when my scheme was in operation, and when the risks of the State had been run, the two classes of landlords and tenants would still remain, as heretofore, face to face, and the great social difficulty, the instrument and the occasion of so much agitation, would remain unsolved, that the whole system of dual ownership, with its attendant evils, would remain untouched, and that while we had exhausted the only securities which Ireland possesses for establishing peasant proprietorship we had not moved one step towards accomplishing that object. Now, I have told the House that I have always been in favour of fining down rents, but only if two conditions are fulfilled. The first condition is that such a proposal should be subordinated to the main scheme for establishing peasant proprietors, and the second condition is that the tenants on the lands where you have fined down the rents, should be tenants holding under what is called in Ireland a fee-farm grant or perpetual tenure, and not, as they would be under the plan of the hon. Member for Cork, still in the position of tenants under the Land Act of 1881. I regret that the hon. Member for Cork is not now present, but that is, I think, a fair account to give of the view we take of his proposal. This I believe was not laid before the House with any desire to embarrass the Government, and I trust that the manner in which I have commented upon it will be accepted by hon. Members opposite as prompted by a similar spirit. I proceed now to a subject of vital importance, and which has been dealt with at any length by only one speaker. I mean the congested districts. The hon. Member for for Cork told us that he intended to deal with the subject, but he forgot to do so, and the task, therefore, fell upon the shoulders of the hon. Member for East Mayo. I listened with attention to the speech of the hon. Member, and I have read it with not less attention, and I am bound to say that to me he appears greatly to over-rate the differences between his plan and the plan of the Bill; and in those respects in which his plan differs from the plan of the Bill it differs materially for the worse. The hon. Member made a most eloquent, vehement, and fiery attack upon emigration, and he stated that, although the Bill provided for migration, practically he understood the Government to discountenance everything but emigration. But that is not a fair interpretation either of the Bill or of my speech in introducing it. The Bill provides for migration as well as for emigration, and it will rest not with the Government but with the Congested Districts Board to decide which plan is to be adopted. If my right hon. Friend the Attorney General expressed his private opinion that it would be difficult to carry out on a large scale a system of migration, that was not his interpretation of the provisions contained in the Bill; but his inference drawn from the facts of the case, an inference which, I am bound to say, I entirely endorse. If migration can be carried out, let us have it, for I shall prefer it; but has the hon. Gentleman considered the inevitable difficulties which must attend every system of migration? The great difficulty of all is the difficulty of cost. I do not mean to argue it at length; but I will put before the House a line of reasoning which will suggest the class of objections which will have to be met whenever you attempt to carry out schemes of this kind. I presume the House would not intend to house the migrated population worse than Irish labourers are housed under the Labourers' Acts; and it would be recognised that the social amelioration of this class was one of the objects of the Bill. The average cost of a labourer's cottage under the Labourers' Acts is about £110; and that will be the first cost that will have to be incurred if you have a system of migration. The second item of cost is the outlay on the purchase of land. The land to be bought must necessarily be land not in the occupation of a tenant, otherwise you must buy out two sets of people, owners and occupiers. It is a curious comment on the effect of recent legislation that if you want land that is not under cultivation by tenants you will have to pay considerably more for it than you would have to pay if you bought land in the occupation of tenants. I do not suppose you would wish to plant your migrants upon holdings of less value than those in the congested districts. The hon. Member for Mayo implied that the inferior limit for holdings ought to be £20 annual valuation. Therefore, for every migrated family you would have to provide a house that will cost £110, and you will have to buy at 20 years' purchase a holding of £20 annual value. Of course, these are speculative figures, but if they be anything like the facts it will cost you, without providing for the improvemenss necessary in turning a grazing farm into an arable farm, £500 for every family you attempt to migrate, even supposing that suitable land can be found. No exchequer can bear the cost of this on any very great scale. Moreover, I believe the class of population you will have to deal with live upon the seaboard of Donegal, are accustomed to eke out their living by fishing and by labour in England, and are in the habit of cultivating land by the use of seaweed; and my conviction is that the change in their mode of life caused by transferring them to inland districts would be so great that they would as soon emigrate as migrate. I am, of course, only giving expression to the private opinions I have formed; but if the Members of the Congested Districts Board should come to a different conclusion, no one would rejoice more than I should. The hon. Gentleman went on to tell us the Bill did not provide for fishing. It does provide for fishing; but the hon. Gentleman is in error in supposing that you can encourage fishing by Irishmen on the west coast of Ireland merely by multiplying harbours and loans. You cannot do anything of the sort. The proof of that is that Manxmen, Scotchmen, and Frenchmen come and fish under the very eyes of Irishmen. You want a great deal more than deep harbours, which exist already along the coast of Ireland more plentifully than on the coasts of England and Scotland. What are really required, more than harbours and loans, are knowledge and organisation. I warn those who are seeking the solution of this congested districts question by the encouragement of fishing, that it is not harbours and loans that will enable the fisheries on the West Coast of Ireland to rival those of England and Scotland; they will have to change not only the habits but also the distribution of the population on the Irish coasts. It will not be sufficient to create harbours that will accommodate large boats. You must collect the people round them. And they will have to learn that subordination which is necessary when there are ten or a dozen men in a boat. Capital will have to be organised, the fishing industry itself will have to be organised, and the children of fishermen will have to learn the subsidiary industries which are carried on in the fishing villages of England and Scotland, and which must be prosecuted if fishing is to be carried on with success. I absolutely agree with the hon. Gentleman that the Congested districts Board ought to do all in its power to encourage the fishing industry; but the hon. Member will see that the great end is not simply a matter of multiplying harbours and showering down loans on fishermen. The hon. Gentleman tells us that we do not provide funds for carrying out the object of this part of the Bill, because the £1,500,000 of the Church surplus is also security for the loans for land purchases in the congested counties. But the hon. Gentleman will see, on reflection, that his inference is not well founded. There is, as I have attempted to show, no probability, no possibility whatever that the Church surplus or the Contingency Fund will be come upon at all. On the worst hypothesis, we shall not come upon the full amount until the limit of loans permitted under the Act shall have been reached, all the purchases have taken place in the congested districts. During that period £41,000 a year will be paid to the Congested Districts Board, which will be available for carrying out the industrial and social objects which the House and I have so much at heart.

MR. DILLON: The right hon. Gentleman has not said one word on my chief proposal, which was the compulsory purchase of landlords' interests at a reasonable figure.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I see how the proposal of the hon. Member would injure the landlords, but I fail to see how it would benefit the tenants more than that of the Bill. The hon. Member proposes to give landlords eight years' purchase for their land; but there is no ground for thinking the land is worth only eight years' purchase. Suppose you bought out the landlords, the first result would be that the State would become the direct landlord of all these people. The second result would be that you would diminish the amounts of their rents. But does the hon. Gentleman think that the reduction of rents will materially affect their prosperity? He must know that the rents in the congested districts have little or nothing to do with the condition of the people. A tenant in these congested districts has a farm—a barren farm, I admit—on which he grows potatoes, feeds pigs, and raises poultry; if the holding be on the seaboard, he probably does a certain amount of fishing; he has a residence—of small intrinsic value, I admit; and for these things he pays much less than an English labourer pays for his cottage and garden, which, I believe, is between £4 and £5 a year. But these poor people pay far less,—£4, £2, or £3; and can anyone contend that an addition or diminution of 3d. per week will make the difference between destitution and prosperity, between civilisation and barbarism? Remember, Sir, that in order to judge of the plan of the Government you must consider not this Bill merely, but other measures we have passed or proposed. You must take into account the proposals contained in the Bill for the registration and transfer of land, brought in last year by the Attorney General, and to be re-introduced this year. You must take into account the great grant of public money which we made last year for the construction of railroads; and I say, if you take these things together no such plan for the benefit of the poorer parts of Ireland has ever been submitted by any Government or Party before. Hon. Gentlemen opposite lay on the Table of the House Session after Session multitudes of Bills on the subject of Irish land—Bills of that kind lie "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa"—but have hon. Members opposite ever suggested any Bill dealing with congested districts?

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Give us the power.

***Mr. A. J. BALFOUR**: Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway have been rich in projects for dealing with the property of the landlords, but show me the Bill that has ever been produced by any of those hon. Members that really deals with the vital and essential difficulties of the congested districts. Hon. Gentlemen make many speeches in Ireland. Has any speech ever been delivered by any Member of this House, or by any man who agrees with hon. Gentlemen opposite, urging the inexpediency of improvident marriages? Hon. Gentlemen appear to regard that as an extremely comic proposal. Hon. Gentlemen have, as in the speech of the hon. Member for Mayo, thrown the whole blame of the excessive population of the West Coast on the landlords. I cannot help thinking that, even in Ireland, some responsibility for having children must lie on the parents. I am aware that that

Mr. A. J. Balfour

appears to be a paradox to hon. Gentlemen opposite, but I can assure them there lies a not unimportant truth at the bottom of it. Have hon. Gentlemen ever discouraged sub-division in the West? [Mr. Dillon: Yes.] Have they ever urged consolidation? [Mr. Dillon: Certainly.] Have they ever produced any scheme in which they have discouraged sub-division? Have they ever urged emigration upon the people where they could not obtain a living at home? Never. Their view is that, whether a living can be obtained or not at home, the people must stay. A more pernicious doctrine, or one more fatal to the interests of the people, was never urged by any responsible politician. The truth is that in this part of the Bill the Government have attempted, perhaps with many imperfections, but they have attempted a task which no Government has ever attempted before. We did so without having before us any examples or suggestions on the part of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway of legislation bearing on this question. We have attacked virgin soil. We have had to trust entirely to the resources of our own ingenuity and invention. When a scheme is thus proposed in all good faith, a scheme which tends to the consolidation of holdings, to the promotion of other industries than agriculture, and to the improvement of agriculture itself, we ought not to be met in the spirit in which the hon. Member for Mayo has met us. I now proceed to some of the principal objections urged against the general scheme of purchase. Here, perhaps, I ought to give the place of honour to an objection urged most ably by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham in the very remarkable speech which he delivered in favour of the Second Reading of this Bill. He urged that the Local Authorities in Ireland should be given a regulative share in the administration of the Bill, that their permission should be asked before the Bill was put in force in their localities, and that they should have some control over particular contracts made between landlords and tenants within the areas of their administration. I think the whole House will admit that the spirit of the observations of the right hon. Gentleman is entirely in accordance with the sentiment which probably everybody in this House entertains. Unquestionably, if Ireland were in a normal condition, I apprehend that it would be a very desirable thing to associate the County Councils in the great work in which the Imperial Parliament is engaged. But is Ireland in a normal condition?

MR. T. M. HEALY: Twenty years of resolute government.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Is Ireland in a normal condition? That is the question we have to answer. This Bill has no *raison d'être* at all, unless it is to carry out an object, not merely local, but national. The end and aim of this Bill is not, as has sometimes been represented, to benefit those tenants and landlords who happen to be vendors or purchasers under it. The object is far wider than that. It affects the interests not merely of the locality in which the purchased holdings are situated, but of the whole Empire. It seems to me to be indisputable that if this be a national object we should not allow ourselves to be frustrated in carrying it out by the action of any Local Authority, especially if we have ground for thinking that that Local Authority will be influenced by political reasons, and by political reasons alone. The Local Authorities in many parts of Ireland—there never was any secret about it—are as much elected by political arrangements and on political lines as the Parliamentary Party opposite. If it suited the Parliamentary Party opposite to burke or misuse—to burke the efforts or misuse the liberality of the National Government—I think it would be most rash to give them a fitting instrument for carrying out their designs. Those objections appear to me to carry with them great weight. If they can be answered nobody will be more gratified than I, because I hope the time may come, and I think it will come, when Ireland will be in that normal condition which could justify, nay, compel us, to associate them in the working of one scheme. But until that time has come it appears to me that it would be an experiment of some rashness, to say the least of it, to hand over to the County Councils the sole authority for determining whether this great object of the Imperial Parliament shall be carried into effect or not. I do not know whether hon. Gentlemen desire me to develop for them this part of the subject? I have clearly indicated my views, and while with the general intention of the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman I concur heartily, on the other hand I am not convinced that it can be safely carried out. Then we are told, and this is the next objection which has been urged with great force, that Irish opinion has been ignored. Now, I entirely admit that any statement coming from those who represent a large portion of the Irish population, and who, in many cases, are probably acquainted with all the circumstances of the persons they represent, is well worthy of consideration in this House. But, after all, we have to look the facts in the face. Hon. Gentlemen opposite do not conceal from us that they look on this Bill as an instrument for embarrassing the Government, and not as an instrument for ameliorating the condition of the people of Ireland. The hon. Member for North-East Cork expressed the amiable hope that this Bill would be the means of destroying a hated Tory Government.

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Cork Co., N.E.): Quote.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Gentleman repudiates the statement I will withdraw it, but I think I saw it in some report of his speech.

MR. W. O'BRIEN: If the right hon. Gentleman desires to know what I said, I did express a hope that one result of the idiotic character of this Bill would be to involve the destruction of the Government, but I stated most distinctly that my ground of objection to the Bill was that while the fee simple of their farms would be bought for a very small section of tenants, the great majority of the farmers who were excluded from benefits under the Bill were to be held security against the non-payment of the debts of the richer minority.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course I never questioned but that the hon. Gentleman would find an excellent argument to support his opinion. I think that I am borne out in my statement that he expressed the amiable hope that the Bill might be made the instrument of destroying a detested Government.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: I did not suggest that as my motive for opposing the Bill.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, one of his motives. [Mr. W. O'Brien: No.] The controversy is not worth carrying on across the floor of the House. I will take another example from a speech which I heard in this House the other night, delivered by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool. He distinctly said that if, by refusing to pay their instalments, purchasers could bring disaster on a hostile Government, they ought to repudiate their obligations.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I said something very different from that.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: This is from the *Times*. [*Laughter.*] Well, can the hon. Member find me a better report? [An hon. Member: The *Star*, and *laughter.*] The hon. Member said—

> "He would go further, and say that if any tenant entered into a contract under this Act, and if by refusing to pay he could bring pressure upon a hostile Government like the present, that tenant would be justified in so acting."

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I beg to say that I admit entirely the accuracy of that Report. If the right hon. Gentleman is a man capable of making a distinction I think he will find that there is a great deal of difference between that and what he attributes to me. I am not addressing Gentlemen of less acute minds than that of the right hon. Gentleman. But there is, he will see, a very great difference between my proposition and that repudiation of contracts which he attributes to me.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sorry not to be able to earn the compliment that has been passed on my acuteness. I do not quite catch the distinction to which he refers; but, at all events, however you explain that statement away, persons who take such a view of the Land Purchase Bill proposed by a Tory Government cannot be considered by that Tory Government as very disinterested advisers. Hon. Members look—I do not say they are wrong, but they look upon this question from a political point of view. They regard themselves as being sent here to carry Home Rule. I do not say that they consider any means good which may promote that object, but I do say that they allow themselves considerable latitude in their choice of means and, therefore, naturally, it is difficult for us to gain all the advantage we should be glad to gain from the undoubted local knowledge of many of them—I say many of them, because, as the House is aware, local knowledge is not possessed by all. There was a gentleman, for instance, who addressed the House the other night for the first time —I refer to the hon. Member for Cavan. He made a very able speech, and I think that the hon. Member will be an ornament to the Debates in this House. But that Gentleman, who told us that he represented the views of Cavan upon this question, is a gentleman who has selected an English University for his education and an English profession for his livelihood, and at this moment, I believe, while denouncing the Land Purchase Bill, is himself making every preparation for selling his own estate under the Ashbourne Act, and, in the polite phrase of his leader, absconding with the plunder.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I wish to make a personal explanation. I stated most distinctly in the speech which I delivered that I had no objection whatever to land purchase under the Ashbourne Act in places where there was no pressure of coercion and no pressure of arrears. I did not mention the fact, but I have no objection to its being mentioned, that in a county where, as it is chiefly Orange, there has been no coercion, though possibly there may have been some necessity for it, and on an estate where there is no pressure of arrears, I have made preparations to sell.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think that hon. Gentlemen opposite have been fortunate in the interruptions they have made. I quite accept every statement made by the hon. Member; but that does not qualify my assertion that he is, in the phrase of the hon. Member for Cork, "absconding with the plunder." Now, Sir, a theory has been advanced against which I think this House should utter its most earnest protest. We have been told that if a majority of the Irish Members refuse their consent to the Bill the

Irish people are not bound by it. I say that that theory has no justification either in politics or in morals. We do not vote here by nations; we vote here as individuals, representing separate constituencies; and if you are once going to adopt the theory that no constituency is bound by any Act passed in this Legislature if the Member for that constituency votes against it, then I say that you have not merely got Home Rule, but chaos and disintegration. I should be glad to know from hon. Members who take that view how they propose under Home Rule to manage the problem of Ulster. How would hon. Members who hold that theory have been able to deal with the Ulster minority if there had been a Home Rule Parliament sitting in College Green, and the Land Bill proposed in 1886 had been passed, and if that minority had said, "We do not propose to pay our instalments under the Act?" I want to know by what arguments hon. Gentlemen who have committed themselves to this new theory of moral obligation are going to refute such a contention? I think they would find themselves very much embarrassed. When we get to the further development of this doctrine contained in the quotation which I have read from the speech of the hon. Member for the Scotland Division do we not find in it another and an almost tragic example of the doctrine which has been ground into the very fibre of the Irish people during recent years of agitation, that every man who swindles his creditor is doing his country a service? The next objection, cognate to the one which I am considering, but distinct from it, depends on the absence from this Bill of what is called a buffer between the Imperial Exchequer on the one hand and the peasant owners on the other. Now, Sir, let me point out that the object of a buffer, be it a Local Authority or a Local Legislature, is twofold. The object, in the first place, is to give to the locality an interest in the honesty of the people living in the locality; and, in the second place, to prevent evictions having to be carried out by the State. With regard to the first of these objects, I maintain that without a buffer the machinery of the present Bill attains it more completely than the machinery of any Bill ever yet proposed. Take, for example, the Bill proposed in 1886 by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. Under that Bill the burden was thrown on the Irish Government of directly collecting the rents from the owner. It is true that the Irish Government was supposed to be a buffer between the English Government and the Irish tenant.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): No; the English Exchequer had nothing whatever to do with the Irish tenant.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman caught what I said. I said that the Irish Government under his Bill was supposed to occupy the position more or less of a buffer between the English Government and the Irish tenant.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Not in the least. A buffer is between two things. The English Government had nothing to do with the Irish tenant.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A buffer may be between two persons or two things. I am very anxious not to misrepresent the views of the right hon. Gentleman expressed in the Bill of 1886; but am I not right in saying that the English Exchequer was to lend money and the tenant was ultimately to return the money, and that the instalments were to be collected by somebody from the tenants? That "somebody" was an officer of the Irish Government; and, therefore, I apprehend that I am strictly correct in saying that the Irish Government was a buffer between the English Exchequer and the Irish tenant.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The remedy of the English Government did not lie against the tenant at all; the English Government had nothing whatever to do with the collection of money or with the tenants.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes; and the reason that the English Government had nothing to do with the tenants was that there was this buffer. At all events, my point is not now the position of the English Government, but the position of the Irish Government; and I say that there was no buffer between the Irish Government and the tenant-purchaser, and that on the Irish Government was thrown by the Bill of 1886 the full responsibility of collecting rents from these tenant purchasers, while the locality had no penalty imposed upon it if there was a strike against rents within its limits. That will not be denied. I therefore say that the Irish Government was, under the Bill of 1886, brought far more directly into contact with the tenant than is the English Government under this Bill, and for this reason. Under the Bill of 1886 all that the Irish Government had to rely upon was eviction if the tenant did not pay, and eviction, though it might influence the individual, could not influence the locality. But under this Bill you are in an entirely different position. You have still the remedy of eviction, but if you do not choose to evict, the British Exchequer is none the worse; while the locality has the strongest pecuniary interest in seeing that the obligation to the English Exchequer is duly fulfilled by the purchaser. I assert, therefore, that I am justified in my contention that the one great object of what is called the buffer system is more completely carried out under the machinery of this Bill than it would have been under the machinery of the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. The objection is that the State cannot throw upon other shoulders the duty of evicting, when evictions are necessary. On that I would remark that though, of course, the State is not directly responsible for the collection of rent now, yet that under no civilised Government can you deprive a landlord of his remedy against a defaulting tenant, or refuse the officers of the Court, who enforce that remedy, the protection to which they are entitled. Therefore, in the sense of protecting those engaged in evictions the State is at this moment, and must always be, do what you will, concerned in and responsible for eviction. But under this Bill the eviction of a defaulting tenant purchaser will not be for the purpose of replenishing the British Treasury; it will be for the purpose of preventing loss to the local Irish Treasury, and that makes all the difference. If not a single eviction were carried out, the British Treasury would not lose a penny; the loss would entirely fall under the Bill upon those local purposes for which the contribution is at present made from the Imperial funds. Therefore, when the State evicts under this Bill it does not evict as the Irish Government would have evicted under the Bill of 1886 for its own sake. It evicts for the sake of the locality. That, I think it will be admitted, alters the whole complexion of the procedure. Now, before I come to the main question —I mean the question of the security offered to the British Exchequer—let me correct one mistake. We are told that the Bill will drive out the Irish landlords. That is not its object and, in our opinion, will not be its effect. The Irish landlords at present, in so far as they are in conflict with their tenants and so far as they are made the objects of this chronic agitation, are not only rendered powerless for good, but they are practically driven out of the country. Relieve them of the consequences of this agitation, and I believe that the Irish landlords will reside not less, but more, in the country, with greater power of usefulness and greater power of enjoying country life among those with whom they have been accustomed to live. They will again be on good terms with their neighbours and their former tenantry; and I believe that, so far from diminishing the number, the prestige, the influence, or authority of the landlord class in Ireland, this Bill will do a great deal to increase them. Now, I come to the question of British credit as affected by the provisions of this measure. I think one fact must have come out very clearly to every hearer in the course of this Debate. No single critic of the Bill has ever attempted to show by detailed argument that the cash portion of the Guarantee Fund is not amply sufficient to meet every case of natural calamity due to agricultural depression or even to famine. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, the ablest and acutest critic of the Bill, did not attempt to show it. It has not been shown either by any hon. Gentleman below the Gangway. They have contented themselves with the vague assertion that the security is not worth the paper on which it is written; but beyond generalities of that kind there has not been a single successful attempt to show that the cash portion, as distinguished from the contingent portion, of the Guarantee Fund, is not amply sufficient to meet everything short—I am not sure that I ought to use the word short—of actual famine. The more you work out the method in which the cash portion will work, the more complete the security seems. I am justified therefore in ignoring now from default arising from calamity, and I pass to the consideration of default arising from repudiation. Even moderate dishonesty, if I may use the phrase, is amply provided for by the cash portion of the Guarantee Fund. I do not know whether the degree of repudiation recommended, or hypothetically recommended, by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division would be met by it.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I did not recommend repudiation at all; I deny it *in toto.*

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, a temporary refusal to pay.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Temporary refusal to pay which should cease with the existence of such a Government as the present.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, Sir, I will not use the offensive word again; but the theory of temporary refusal to pay which is now supported by the hon. Gentleman appears to be this—if Irish tenants happen to dislike the Government in office, they are at liberty to withhold all payments. If this thing should happen at the beginning of a seven years' Parliament, it is quite clear that the British Exchequer or the Local Authority would be out of its funds for a considerable period. Now, let us leave the theory of moderate dishonesty and come to the extravagant hypothesis of universal repudiation. Universal repudiation, as I understand it, has been distinctly adumbrated, or regarded as possible, by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) in a very remarkable passage of his speech. He told us the Government was to understand that not only the dishonesty of the Irish tenants, but their honesty, depended on the *fiat* of the Irish agitator. He told us that if purchasers under the Ashbourne Acts and the Church Acts had systematically and honestly paid their debts for the last 20 years, it was because they had always been recommended to pay by hon. Gentlemen who sit below the Gangway.

MR. DILLON: No; I did not say that. I said that in our view our advocacy of payment should be taken into account as an element of consideration.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: These are the words which the hon. Gentleman used—

> "It had been pointed out in the course of the Debate that the instalments due to the Government under the sales of land that had taken place in Ireland had been punctually paid. Why? Because the Irish Members had impressed on the people the moral obligation resting on them to pay the money. That was a state of things very different from what would have been the case if they had told the people that they were under no obligation to pay. Therefore, there was no analogy whatever between the condition of things now prevailing and that which might prevail when the leaders of the future, whoever they might be, or from whatever motive, proclaimed to the people that they would be justified, and acting patriotically, in refusing to pay the Government a single penny."

I contend, therefore, that I am justified in saying that the hon. Member for Mayo looks forward to a time when possibly other leaders may arise "who know not Joseph" [*laughter*, and an IRISH MEMBER: "Judas"] who may give advice to the people urging them to repudiate payment, on patriotic grounds, and if that course is pursued the people would refuse to pay their debts. I accept for the sake of argument the hon. Gentleman's view of the honesty of the Irish tenants and the honesty of the future Irish leaders. I accept the theory he and has laid before the House.

MR. DILLON: I said I should do it myself under certain circumstances.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not like to put it so offensively.

MR. DILLON: I will relieve the right hon. Gentleman of all anxiety and say, for my own part, that I most certainly would do it.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: In my heart I did not doubt it; but I did not wish to import anything acrimonious into the Debate. But while I accept the hypothesis that the time may come when the Member for East Mayo and his friends will recommend repudiation, I desire to point out that we shall not be saved from that calamity, as Gentlemen opposite vainly imagine, by their giving their consent to this or any other Bill. How can such a consent bind their action in the future? I have known other sections and other political Parties change their minds. Your theory of the way in which a Land Purchase Bill ought to be carried is that it is safe, and only safe, when consent has been given to it by the Members from Ireland. But what security have we that that consent will last? What ground have we for supposing that the Member for Mayo may not change his mind, or may not be succeeded by a more extreme politician than himself, who may give advice to the Irish people which the Member for Mayo now says that even he is ready to give under certain contingencies? If that happens, how should we be more secure if we brought in a Bill which was signed, sealed, and assented to by every Irish Member sitting in this House? I accept, then, and I ask the House to accept, the possible effects of universal repudiation as a contingency which has to be contemplated, and contemplated equally whether we have or have not the support of the Irish Members. What we really have to determine is whether it can be successfully carried out under this Bill, and I say it cannot be carried out, and that the efforts of the Member for Mayo will be exhausted in the vain effort to accomplish any policy at all resembling universal repudiation. I will explain why. Anybody who has carefully examined the methods of Irish agitation against the landlords in the past, and the measure of success they have met with, will see that success can only occur under three conditions. In the first place, the landlord attacked must be financially weak; in the second place, the repudiation must be backed up by a system of general boycotting in the neighbourhood; and, in the third place, there must be adequate funds at the disposal of the agitators to support the evicted tenants. Now, I say none of these conditions will be fulfilled in the case of universal repudiation. You are not dealing here with a financially weak landlord; you are dealing with the British Exchequer; and I want to ask this question of hon. Gentlemen, Do they think that the Plan of Campaign would ever have been started, or if started would ever have succeeded on an estate on which all the rent which the landlord derived from the land was given back in the form of local subscriptions to the neighbourhood? Clearly all the landlord would have to do in these circumstances would be to diminish his subscriptions, shilling for shilling, as the tenant diminished his rent. Now that is the precise position of the British Exchequer. It has only to cut off, penny for penny, its habitual subscriptions to Irish local purposes, and it will not be a penny the worse. The second condition which has to be fulfilled is the condition that there should be general boycotting in the neighbourhood. This is obvious, because the whole of our legislation is founded on the land hunger in Ireland, and the land hunger is never likely to be more acute than when the land to be occupied is held under very favourable conditions. Therefore, you will require to have your machinery of boycotting in its very highest state of efficiency if you mean to prevent new purchasers from coming in and taking farms from which defaulting purchasers have been evicted.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Where will they come from?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Now, Sir, I fail to see what motive the neighbourhood has for taking part in this criminal conspiracy. By your own hypothesis these men who refuse to pay are holding their land under exceptionally favourable terms. They are objects of jealousy to the non-purchasing tenants in the neighbourhood, and why should these non-purchasing tenants band together in a criminal conspiracy to protect their more fortunate rivals? No reason can be shown for it, and I do not think it will be done. But there is even a stronger obstacle in the way of carrying out a system of repudiation. The reason why there has been no attempt to spread the Plan of Campaign over any large area of Ireland is that there is not money to support the evicted tenants. Everybody knows that who knows Ireland. I believe that the tenants evicted from the Ponsonby estate, in the County of Cork, are paid at the rate of £3 a month. That is, at all events, what I have heard, and I do not suppose that you are likely to get these tenants to give up their homes to please hon. Members opposite for a much less sum. Now, I am told that 150,000 tenants are going to buy under this Bill. If all the tenants are going to repudiate, and if you are going to support them all at the rate I have mentioned, you will require a sum of £5,400,000 to do it. I apprehend that the resources of the National League, considerable as they may be, would hardly be equal to the strain. You tell us that we shall never dare to withhold the contingent portion of the grant if there is a general repudiation. I do not agree. I do, indeed, agree that if, owing to some visitation of Heaven, some great calamity which man is powerless to resist or to ward off, the agricultural population of Ireland were reduced to starvation, then you could not touch the Contingent Fund; but if Ireland were still joined to England the Imperial Parliament would have to put their hand in their pocket to help the unfortunate peasantry. If, however, this repudiation arises from a criminal conspiracy in which every one of the ratepayers or a great majority of the ratepayers are themselves participators, then I say that neither principle nor policy, nor even sentiment, would interfere to protect those who by hypothesis are guilty of this deliberate crime. Now, Sir, I proceed to deal with a part of the case, which I had thought I might have been spared. I mean a defence of the extension of a peasant proprietary in Ireland. The right hon. Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt), forgetful of his own previous efforts in a different direction, actually defended the present system of dual ownership in Ireland. I believe that that system is open to every objection which can be urged against other systems of land tenure, while it does not possess one of the merits which other systems possess. On the bad stock of this system you engraft a social agitation which has torn Ireland to pieces for the last 10 years, and to cure that agitation you adopt the absurd, though well-meaning, expedient of settling every land contract by means of a Land Court. What has been the result of that by the confession of hon. Members below the Gangway opposite? The hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon) made a violent attack on the present constitution of the Land Commission. He implied in the clearest language that, in his opinion, the present holders of office in that Court were not doing justice to the tenant. I am not going, at this moment, to take up the defence of the able and honest men who have the duty of determining fair rents in Ireland; but I want to point out the evil of the system under which the whole value of every man's property in Ireland depends not so much on his industry, not so much on his thrift, not so much on the condition of the market or the oscillations from time to time in the value of land, as upon how the Land Court happens to be constituted. [*Home Rule Cheers.*] You cheer. You think it is a wholesome system. You think it is a system which we ought to encourage and perpetuate. I say it is a system which, however it is worked, is a bad system. Supposing hon. Members opposite got their way and cut down rents by three-fourths through their appointment to the Land Commission, it would ruin the landlords no doubt, but would it benefit the tenants? I say the system is essentially and radically rotten. You cannot remain where you are; you cannot go back; you must go forward; and the only way in which you can go forward is by attempting, as fast as your means allow, to substitute some rational system of tenure for the absurd and abnormal system which, partly by custom, partly by legislation, and partly through historical causes, has grown up in Ireland. Of course, I admit that objections may be raised to this Bill. I never heard of a Bill to which objections, and even legitimate objections, could not be raised. My contention is that this Bill has merits of its own which no other Bill on the subject has ever possessed. Many of the objections to this Bill were equally or even more applicable to the scheme proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1886; but this Bill, and this Bill alone, makes the security of the British Exchequer absolute. This Bill, and this Bill alone, provides for the "lean years" and for that casual and occasional inability to pay which may happen to the most thrifty and the most industrious of tenants. This Bill, and this Bill alone, attempts to do something—and something substantial—for the labouring classes, who have been excluded absolutely from the benefits of every other Bill ever proposed. This Bill, and this Bill alone, gives to localities the very strongest interest in maintaining the honesty of every purchaser within their midst; and this Bill, and this Bill alone, deals with the perennial problem of Irish society—the problem of the congested districts. These are the great claims of the Bill, and I confidently commend it to the favour of the House. I have been accused by the hon. Member for East Mayo, and by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, of having claimed that this Bill is a complete solution of the Irish difficulty. Language of that sort has never been used by me; it is the language of a quack, and not of a doctor. I do not believe that it is within the wit of man to provide by one legislative Act a complete cure for every one of the historic ills under which Ireland has suffered, and is suffering; but I do say that this is a great contribution—a practical and material contribution—to the greatest problem which English statesmanship has got to deal with. And recollect—and I beg hon. Gentlemen to take this to heart—this is a boon, and I believe a great boon, which under no circumstances can Ireland give to herself. No patriotism, no ability, on the part of Irish politicians, if they had to rely on Irish resources alone, could give this immense benefit to the tenantry of Ireland. They are dependent, and they must be dependent, upon the credit of the British Empire. The Radical Party—those represented by the senior Member for Northampton—say they will never give it to them. I do not know whether that view is shared by the legitimate Opposition above the Gangway; but if the Irish cannot give it themselves, if they are not going to get it from the Radical Party, I advise them to get it from the only Party that can or will give it to them. A great deal of time has been spent—in my opinion, mis-spent—in this Debate in discussing whether or not a man, when he purchases his holding, becomes a Loyalist. I am not in the slightest degree influenced by the question. My object is not political, but social, We do not desire by this Bill to score a political trick, or to trip up an opponent; and I appeal in all earnestness to the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, and to the leader of the new Liberal Party, who declaims so eloquently on platforms about the woes of Ireland, but who refuses to give 6d. out of his pocket. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: Hear, hear!] He will not spend 6d. out of his pocket to cure the greatest calamity under which Ireland suffers. Let the country, and let the Irish Members, note the precise cash value of Radical sympathies. If I appeal to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton and those who follow him in vain, I hope I shall not appeal in vain to the Members who sit near him, and who represent Ireland. I am sure that in their hearts they must know that this Bill is really a great contribution to Land Reform in Ireland [*Cries of* "No, no"], and that they will, at all events, show that they are prepared to discuss that which has been honestly offered in a candid, temperate, and impartial spirit. [*Interruption.*] But if to them, and I judge so from their interruptions, I appeal in vain, surely I may appeal to right hon. Gentlemen opposite. They are bound by every public pledge and every private conviction to aid in the establishment of a peasant proprietary in Ireland. Do they seriously believe that a better opportunity for carrying out that policy will ever occur, or that they will be able to find a scheme materially better in any important particular? I believe, if they will forget for one moment the political contests which rages across the floor of this House, and ask themselves, in all seriousness, the question I have put to them, they will be only able to return one answer to it; and if they do so, I think I may appeal to them with more confidence, and perhaps with more success, than I have appealed either to the hon. Member for Northampton or to his Irish allies, to aid in the great work which for no small or Party purpose we have attempted resolutely to take in hand.

(6.10.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The right hon. Gentleman in the closing words of his speech declared that his object is social, not political; but in an earlier passage, when showing cause for refusing to give certain control to Local Bodies in Ireland, he declared his object political, not social. It is rarely that a statesman of experience makes so palpable and so foolish a blunder, and I would recommend him to endeavour to learn at least the state of his own mind before he can hope to impress himself on others. The elaborate speech of the right hon. Gentleman, though it purported to shed a flood of light on the subject, does not alter the fact that the Government in this great affair is pressing this House to legislate in the dark. It is a cardinal principle in their policy in dealing with the affairs of Ireland to refuse the House essential information. When the Coercion Act was before the House we strove in vain to obtain from the right hon. Gentleman some definite particulars of the sweeping allegations upon which the House was misled to pass the Bill. Now we are engaged in considering a Bill which proposes with State money to buy out the Irish landlord at 20 years of the value of what is practically the gross rent of 20 years, and as much in addition as he can extort from the tenant. There is a Court in Ireland for the sale of encumbered estates, and at the present moment there are in that Court for sale estates with a rent of about £2,000,000. If the right hon. Gentleman were proposing to buy anything else but Irish land I am certain he would help the House to ascertain the value of the article by every means in his power. I asked him a few days ago to give the House a Return of the estates for sale, of their situation, their rateable valuation, their rental, and the highest offer of purchase, where any offer of purchase has been made. The right hon. Gentleman informed me that he could not state either the rental of the estates or their rateable valuation, or the highest offer of purchase, although the valuation of each estate is a matter of public record, the rental of the estate is a record of the Court, and every offer made is in the hands of the Judges. Yet this information was not forthcoming for the House. He said that some fragment of the Return would be given. But when? At the end of the present Session, when this Bill will have either passed or been abandoned, or when it cannot be of the slightest use. He refused the Return, because he was well aware that it would disclose the fact that this Bill betrays the State.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I ought to remind the House that the Return asked for is a Return in the power of the Court to give or refuse. It does not come within the scope of any of my officials at all. The information I gave to the House was based on the information of an official of the Court. What the hon. Member wanted would take a very long time to prepare.

MR. SEXTON: The information could be prepared by any clerk in the Land Court in a week; and I refuse to believe that a polite intimation from the right hon. Gentleman to the Judge of the Land Court, whom the right hon. Gentleman is about to place at the head of the Land Department, would not have secured the immediate production of the Return; and I charge the Government with a wilful suppression of facts material to the case before the House. Now, I have a word to say on the verdict of 1886. The country, by a majority in 1886, decided against land purchase involving risk to the State. The hon. Member for Loughborough (Mr. de Lisle) denies that. I did not think there was a Member of this House so hardened as to deny that the judgment of the country in 1886 was that no Land Purchase Bill should be permitted which risked the credit of the State. The verdict, no doubt, was obtained by false pretence, but the judgment is none the less binding on those who obtained it, because they obtained it by deception. The Parties opposite and their confederates on this side told the workmen of England that the credit of the State was risked by the Bill of the Member for Mid Lothian, although that Bill saved the State the risk or trouble of loss and collection from the tenant—although that Bill pledged the public faith and honour of Ireland by a solemn national compact—the public interests of Ireland, the public revenues of Ireland, and the very existence of her domestic Government, in fulfilment of her compact. It was a security as perfect as any man could devise or could desire—a better security, all things considered, than the landlords of Ireland will ever again have any chance of refusing. But the Unionist Party persuaded the country that the Bill involved risk. The country returned its verdict against that Bill, and a verdict against risking the credit of the State, the verdict which at the present moment is the moral sanction for the official existence of the Party opposite. The Member for West Birmingham proved by his speech that the Bill involved considerable risk; and when a Minister without a portfolio makes a declaration of this kind, I think it wants attention from the Party opposite. Why is this Bill introduced to the House, and why is it pressed forward? It is a Bill as hazardous, as can easily be shown, as the former Bill was safe. The verdict of England stands against this Bill. Ireland has not asked you for it. Ireland does not want it. Ireland, so far from being thankful for this Bill, most bitterly resents it, and regards it as an odious and humiliating measure. Why, then, is it pressed forward? I can only infer that the Government do not expect a renewal of their lease of power. They are willing while time is yet left to them to do a good turn to a band of their political confederates, no matter at what hazard to the State. They are indifferent so long as they can do that, and they do not care what deep and bitter trouble they leave to those who will have to take up the work of government after them. But if the Party opposite give up the work of government at least the Party opposite remains; but what is a mystery to me is this, that the Party opposite do not appear to give intelligent thought to their fate as a Party. In a measure of land purchase of this magnitude the conditions apart from the principle are all important. They may make the measure or mar it; they may render it invaluable or useless, or worse than useless. They may constitute it a great public benefit or a public evil and danger. What are the indispensable conditions? They are, firstly, equal dealings with the tenants at large; they are, secondly, equity to the individual purchaser; and, thirdly, real security for the State. If anyone supposes that I do not think that security for the State is as important as the other two, the supposition is erroneous. I desire that all bargains with the State should be kept. I desire, in order that they may be kept, that they shall be voluntarily and freely made; and a matter of the first importance is this, that no Government shall be permitted to create a financial difficulty which would have the effect of embarrassing and impeding the future good relations between Great Britain and Ireland. As to the principle of land purchase by State credit, it must be under sound conditions. It is not necessary at this time of day that a Member of the Irish Party should say that he adopts that principle—the principle is our own. It was the foundation stone of the Land League 10 years ago. It has since been adopted by both Parties in the State. We have struggled for that principle and suffered persecution and imprisonment for it; and our most recent experience has been that in consequence of our persistent pursuit of the principle three distinguished gentlemen, having no connection and no acquaintance with Ireland, have found that we intended to drive the landlords from the country. The landlords, who know more about it, are under the impression that the Government intended to drive them out. At any rate, the notion that we had a quarrel with individuals, and not with an institution—the notion that we desired to drive the landlords out of Ireland has, I think, been disposed of by the offer made in the course of the Debate by my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has asked us what would be said if that offer had been made by him. I confess it would have shared the fate of Parliamentary criticism; but if the proposal had been made by the right hon. Gentleman we would then have compared it with ideal perfection; but the proposal being made as an alternative scheme, we have compared it with the Bill against which it was directed, and it is saying very little indeed for the scheme of my hon. Friend that we have found it an infinitely better scheme than the scheme embodied in the Bill. It is an error to suppose that my hon. Friend by his offer committed himself to the Bill or any part of it. In making his offer he was limited to the conditions of the case. What are the conditions of the case? He was confronted by a Bill which will be passed through this House by a majority no matter what Irish Members may say or do; and the question to which he addressed himself was—could any better use than the use proposed in the Bill be made of the £33,000,000 which it is proposed to expend in the interests of certain classes? I venture to think my hon. Friend suggested a scheme which answered that question, for if his proposal had been adopted the landlords generally—I speak from the point of view of the landlords now—with least disturbance of their position would have obtained greater relief than a small portion of them will obtain under the present Bill. Under my hon. Friend's scheme the tenants all over Ireland would have obtained immediately a greater reduction than this Bill is likely to offer them, and the State would have had to deal with a limited number of landlords upon the security of their estates, and might have got rid of flimsy guarantees instead of having under this Bill to deal with a multitude of tenants upon a scheme embracing all kinds of holdings at excessive rates. The criticism of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) did not affect the essential validity of the scheme. It is true that the general average between large farms and small farms would not be the same on an individual estate as it is all over Ireland; but the principle of fining-down rents might have been applied within wide limits. As to the observation of the Member for West Birmingham, that some Irish landlords are not encumbered, I think he might go out and search with a lantern and not find one. If he did find one I say that Irish landlord would do well in his own interest to accept the capital sum for a certain reduction of his rent, rather than give the reduction without any equivalent, as the mass of the landlords unquestionably in Ireland will have to do as soon as the transactions under the present Bill create a lower standard of payment. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked two questions in connection with the scheme. He asked of my hon. Friend would the scheme abolish dual ownership? No, Sir, because the money is not forthcoming, and you cannot make 1d. do the work of 6d. But does the Bill of the Government abolish the system of dual ownership? The Bill of the Government indirectly, but not the less certainly, means ruin to the great majority of the landlords of Ireland. The Chief Secretary exhausted rhetoric in denouncing the existing system of dual ownership; but his Bill not only continues but perpetuates the present system of dual ownership over at least five-sixths of Ireland. In reply to the other question of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether we could insure him against a strike against remnants of rent under the scheme of my hon. Friend, I ask him another question. Can he insure himself against a strike against the annual payments under his Bill? The weapon levelled by the Chancellor of the Exchequer recoils upon himself. The scheme of my hon. Friend would have proved to be a palliative measure; it would have mitigated dual ownership; it would have relieved the strained relations between londlord and tenant; but the effect of your Bill will be that it will leave dissatisfaction even among the landlords you buy out; and, as regards the landlords you do not buy out, it will leave them absolutely helpless in the face of the strike. The Government proposed to take in the scheme of my hon. Friend to their Bill as a lodger. My hon. Friend, however, demanded the status of an occupier. The point of his suggestion is that if the £30,000,000 is to be usefully employed it should be employed entirely for the purpose of fining down rent. I do not see how you can carry on side by side a system of fining down rent and of voluntary purchase. It is evident the two schemes could not run together. At any rate, in order that the scheme of my hon. Friend should have a fair chance of success, the whole of the money would have to be applied to it, because the Government would foster its own child and starve the stepchild. They would spend all the money upon their own plan, and by-and-by they would tell my hon. Friend that their plan was going on exceedingly well and that the plan of my hon. Friend had failed. Of course, with your majority at your back, you may do whatever you please; but if you introduce the scheme into your Bill as supplementary, and not alternative, you will do it without the consent of my hon. Friend and on your own responsibility; and whatever some may think of the rejection of the scheme proposed by my hon. Friend, I think the landlords hereafter will have cause to lament it. I am greatly astonished that the right hon. Gentleman has not endeavoured to explain away the extraordinary error which he made in his former speech. He placed the capital value of the Guarantee Fund at £33,000,000; but when the Return came into our hands it turned out that the capital fund is only value for £27,000,000, and that in order to make it even £27,000,000 the right hon. Gentleman had to include a credit which did not exist at the time of the introduction of this Bill—a credit never heard of in this House until the Budget Speech three weeks afterwards — a credit which does not exist at the present moment, and which has not passed into law. I allude to the £100,000 paid for Customs and Excise. The right hon. Gentleman, by illegitimately appropriating that credit, increased the apparent value of the Guarantee Fund by £2,500,000. I find in another column of the Return a trifling error of £500,000, into which I do not propose to go. The first point is that when the right hon. Gentleman said the capital value of the Guarantee Fund was £33,000,000, the value of it was really £25,000,000. Now, if any man in an actuary's office had made so gross an error he would certainly have lost his place; and the fact that the right hon. Gentleman the sponsor of the Bill has, upon a computation of £33,000,000, made an error of £8,000,000, is a fact which I think will affect the value of his judgment in matters of national finance. I may add that in the Return the sum of £2,000,000, repayable under the Ashbourne Act, is added to the Guarantee Fund. But these £2,000,000 will be a loan, they will not be money for the purpose of a guarantee; but even if they were to be used for the guarantee, then I say still the capital value of the Guarantee Fund is £25,000,000, and not £33,000,000. But the right hon. Gentleman need not concern himself about the capital value. I can show him an easy way to double it. Let him clap on to his Guarantee Fund the money that is paid for the Irish police and the Irish prisons. He takes everything away we find of any use; and if society in Ireland is to be resolved into its primitive elements—so far as the Government can accomplish that—I think we can do as well without the police and without prisons as we can without industrial schools for the prevention of crime, without asylums for the custody of the insane, without dispensaries for the care of the sick poor, without officers for the supervision of the public health, and without primary education. There is one little matter I shall not forget. Among the useful grants the right hon. Gentleman proposes to leave us is £800 a year for vaccine lymph. I think he had better take the vaccine lymph along with the rest It will be very little use to us if no one is left to apply it, and I intend to move in Committee to make the right hon. Gentleman a present of the vaccine lymph, because I think his scheme is so repulsive that it will not be worse even by a touch of small-pox. Are hon. Members opposite entirely certain of the finance of this Bill? They take it, I believe, to be a Bill for the issue of £30,000,000 of Stock to be redeemed by the purchasers in a term of 49 years. I can tell them it is nothing of the kind. It is a Bill to involve the State in far deeper responsibility. This is a Bill for a permanent addition of £70,000,000 to the National Debt. The sum to be issued primarily under the Bill is only £30,000,000, but the Bill provides that the balance of £2,000,000 unexpended under the Ashbourne Acts, and also that all the repayments under the Ashbourne Acts, and all the Sinking Fund under the present Bill shall be re-issued as the repayments come in. Let us pursue it to a conclusion. The Sinking Fund, under the present Bill, is to be issued as it comes in. How are the £30,000,000 to be redeemed? The £30,000,000 will never be redeemed except by Imperial Funds. The repayments under the Ashbourne Act will amount from this time forward to £300,000 a year; the Sinking Fund under the present Bill will also amount to £300,000 a year. These two sums, amounting to £600,000 a year, are, by the provisions of the Bill, to be re-issued for fresh transactions in land. If they are re-issued from year to year, these two sums together, in the normal term of 49 years, will amount to £30,000,000 more. The £30,000,000 more will be issued at the end of that term, and there is no provision to redeem that £30,000,000 under the present Bill, or the £10,000,000 coming in under the Ashbourne Act; and it is perfectly clear that if the Sinking Fund and the repayments are taken away that £40,000,000 coming in under this and the Ashbourne Act could never be redeemed except by Imperial funds. The £30,000,000 will, no doubt, be redeemed, not at the end of the first, but at the end of the second term of 49 years; and I venture to submit that this Bill is a Bill not for the creation of £30,000,000 Stock, to be redeemed in 30 years, but a Bill for the addition of £70,000,000 to the National Debt—first, by the issue of £40,000,000 not to be redeemed, and afterwards, £30,000,000 to be redeemed after a second term of 49 years. The provisions stand plainly in the forefront of the Bill, and will the Chancellor of the Exchequer deny this?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Yes.

MR. SEXTON: Let him wait and hear me. Will he deny that it is intended by the Bill that the Treasury shall re-issue, for fresh transactions, the repayments under the Ashbourne Act, and will he deny also that provision is made for the re-issue of the Sinking Fund under the present Bill?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member does not see that the Sinking Fund is to be used in cancelling a portion of the £30,000,000. When that portion is cancelled then an equal sum can be issued again, but it will not be more than £30,000,000, and the hon. Member will see the operation is that every year a portion of the original £30,000,000 will be paid off, and when that is paid off, and there is so much standing free, issues may take place to repay the amount.

MR. SEXTON: That may be the private intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I can only say it does not appear in the Bill. In the provisions of the Bill the repayments under the Ashbourne Act and the payments to the Sinking Fund may be paid out, and there is no security that the National Treasury may not be involved to the extent of £70,000,000; and I think hon. Gentlemen have not informed themselves of the nature and scope of the liability in which the State is about to be involved, and that they will find this Bill an exceedingly delicate subject by-and-by. The landlords, I understand, are grumbling at the 2¾ Stock. The landlords are dumb in this Debate. They are not dumb elsewhere, and the conferences between the landlords and the Government are conferences of a character not adjudged fit for the public ear, and, in fact, are held *in camera*. Now, Sir, the guaranteed Land Stock under the present Act will stand at 2¾ per cent. for a term of 30 years, but existing funds which stand at 2¾ now will fall to 2½ per cent. at the end of 13 years. You give the Land Stock a preferential position, for, of course, Stock which carries 2¾ per cent. for 30 years is more valuable than that which carries 2¾ for only 13 years, and, therefore, the Land Stock will take a preferential position. I am not sure whether hon. Gentlemen have grasped the fact that when your Bill comes into operation, you will inflict a fine on every Imperial Stockholder proportionate to the extent of this reduction to which I have alluded. Are the Government playing with the landlords, and do they really intend that the Bill shall ever operate or pass? If the Government intend seriously to grapple with the enormous question of land purchase they will first have to clear the ground; they will first have to introduce and pass their Local Government Act for Ireland. It is a very curious sequel to the Election of 1886 that of the two pledges given by the present Government, the pledge in favour of Local Government and the pledge against land purchase with risk to the State, they insist on violating the one pledge as a necessary preliminary to proceeding to keep the other. If you desire to have a valid guarantee you should proceed to create in Ireland elective Local Bodies. If you had given these Local Bodies a veto on transactions under the Bill, you would have been in a position to ask their assent to the hypothecation of the public grants to aid local rates. The Member for West Birmingham perceived the futility of attempting to act without public consent. He declared it to be a very strong and a very serious step, and one that was absolutely dangerous, and he called upon the

Government at least to give a promise that County Councils would be constituted in Ireland on the English model, which would have a veto on transactions under the Bill, which would have an interest in the success of the nation, and that you should request the assent of this County Council to a levy upon local rates. And what does the Chief Secretary reply? He says there is a leader arising in the future, a leader who knows not Joseph. Why, we have a leader now, and the right hon. Gentleman has himself proved himself to be a leader who knows not Joseph. His reply to the appeal of the Member for West Birmingham was that Ireland is not in a normal state. When will Ireland be in a normal state? When will Ireland be fit for any measure of Local Government? Is this the principle—is Ireland never to have elective Local Bodies until the Government can be assured in advance that the will of the Government will be carried out by these bodies when constituted? Sir, I do not know how the Member for West Birmingham will vote, but I have to ask the Liberal Unionist Party how they intend to vote on the Division on the Second Reading of this Bill? One of their leaders has proved the Bill to be dangerous, because he regards it as dangerous to hypothecate public grants payable to Ireland and place a levy on local rates without giving Local Bodies a share of responsibility, or securing their consent. Do the Liberal Unionist Party intend to vote for or against the Second Reading? As to the Member for West Birmingham the House is so used to seeing him vote against his own speeches that there will scarcely be the remnant of a languid interest to observe whether on the present occasion the speech which has not left the Chief Secretary a leg to stand on is sufficient even to convince himself. The Government, if they meant seriously to have laid down an equitable basis of purchase, should have arranged, as the Bill of the Member for Mid Lothian did in 1886, to enable every tenant about to purchase to fix a judicial rent. I go further, and I say that as a necessary precedent to purchase the Government should have arranged to allow every tenant in Ireland, no matter of what status, to subtract from his rent the value of his own improvements to his holding. Men under duress may agree to pay rents on their own improvements, but men with any liberty of choice will never agree to buy from the landlord the capital value of what these improvements represent. At present you have in Ireland the judicial rents under the Act of 1881. You have the judicial rents adjusted under the Act of 1887, and again you have the great majority of the tenants of Ireland still paying rent on the whole of their improvements; and I say, therefore, that your basis of purchase is chaotic, and permanent order cannot be founded upon it. There were two other necessary preliminary conditions. You should have made free contracts possible. And how could that have been done? You should have repealed your Coercion Act, because under your Coercion Act any body of tenants who meet together to consider their interests to decide on an offer of sale are liable to be hauled before two of your Resident Magistrates for holding a meeting of a suppressed branch, or an unlawful assembly, or intimidation; and instead of going into the ownership of their holdings are more likely to go for six months to prison. I tell you so long as the Coercion Act remains in Ireland land purchase will never work. Lastly, Sir, you should apply to Ireland—as you have in Scotland—a provision to liquidate arrears. Arrears accumulated widely in 1885 and subsequent years, and the existence of arrears makes a tenant liable to eviction, and places him at the mercy of the landlords. So long as you abstain from applying to Ireland the policy of liquidation, which you have applied to Scotland in respect of arrears, it is futile and illusory to look for free contracts in the country. Therefore, I say the Government have introduced this Bill, while they have deliberately ignored every one of the essential preliminary conditions. Now, Sir, there is a part of the Bill about which scarcely anything has been said. Yet I think that part of the Bill affords the most striking evidence of a sinister and dangerous intent. I refer to part 3 of the Bill, which constitutes the Land Department, and proposes to place at the head of that Department the Judge of the Land Court, who has blocked that Court with two millions of rental by waiting for unattainable prices. The salaries of the non-judicial

Commissioners amounted to £7,500. The Bill proposes to make them £12,000. One of these Commissioners a few years ago was a sub-official in one of the minor Courts. Another was a small law agent. The incomes of these gentlemen did not reach £1,000 a year. Two others accepted as sub-commissioners at £1,000 a year, and now their salaries are to be made £3,000, and I miss any explanation of the reason for such a proposal. I consider it absolutely unjustifiable in relation to the ordinary remuneration of the services of this class in Ireland. These Commissioners have been hitherto under the control of this House, and properly, as this House is the guardian of the public purse, but now their salaries are to be placed on the Consolidated Fund. They are to hold office as Judges, they are to be removable only on Address from both Houses, which means as long as they do the work of the Land Courts as the landlords want it done that they can never be removed. Sir, these officials, who are about to expend £30,000,000 out of the public purse, of which this House is the guardian, are, by a stroke of the pen of the right hon. Gentleman, to be removed from the control of this House as completely as if they were ambassadors of a foreign State. What is the meaning of that proposal? What purpose lies under it? Sir, there is something more. The Land Commission at this moment costs the country in salaries the enormous sum of about £100,000 a year. It is a temporary Department, but the right hon. Gentleman takes power in his Bill to break the law of 1881, by which no person in the employ of the Land Commission, whether a Commissioner or otherwise, has any claim to superannuation or any other allowance by reason of the abolition of his office or any other cause, and the right hon. Gentleman proposes, firstly, at his pleasure, to place all these officials upon the permanent Civil Service of the State and secondly, to place every man of them upon the Pension Fund first of the United Kingdom, and eventually of Ireland. I denounce the proposal as an attempt to bribe the Department engaged in the administration of vast sums of public money. And I tell you if you accept these proposals to make these Commissioners irresponsible, to make this Department, with this enormous overgrowth of work, a permanent Department, to place these officials, high and low, upon the Permanent Civil Service Pension List, you will see if you accept these proposals how far and in what directions your £30,000,000 will go, and how much pains will be taken either to protect the interests of the purchaser or to guard the interests of the State. I give you humble warning on the subject. I come now to say a few words on the Congested Districts Scheme. The main aspect of that scheme is the appropriation of an Irish Fund without Irish consent of any kind or sort whatever. We protest against the filching away of £1,500,000. We say the balance of the Church Surplus Fund should be employed for Irish public purposes in accordance with the working of Irish opinion. What right have you to take away this £1,500,000 of Irish public money? And for what purpose? For the purpose of making good the defaults of private individuals upon contracts over which the public have no control. I say that this alone is a fatal objection to the finance of the scheme. Again, the congested districts are segregated, they are taken out of their counties, these districts which are usually on the verge of insolvency, these districts which are always staggering under poor rate, these districts are separated from the rest, while you promise that a purchaser upon the congested districts, even if only buying a strip of moor or mountain or bog, shall pay 80 per cent. of the old rent for five years. You think this system will not produce default when you place this responsibility upon those pauperised and already overburdened districts. Migration is mentioned in this scheme, but it points to no definite purpose. Migration could be usefully employed if it were employed by men of knowledge. The few words spoken by right hon. Gentlemen have shown what is their intention upon it. Emigration, and emigration alone, is what you have in your mind. The right hon. Gentleman thinks it is a pernicious idea that the Irish people should stay at home. I tell him emigration is no cure. If Irish history has proved anything it has amply proved that. No scheme of emigration will be tolerable to us unless it is accompanied, as this scheme is not, by some definite plan for the future settlement of the people in the countries to which they are consigned. Let me say that, having first applied the Church Surplus Fund, its capital and its income, to make good the default upon the purchase of land, you then proceed to apply it to such philanthropic schemes. I tell you nothing is more likely than that the capital and income of this fund will be swallowed up by default. The right hon. Gentleman proposes a Board. Why, Sir, we are plagued with Boards in Ireland. What are to be the constituents of this new Board? The right hon. Gentleman himself is to be at the head of it. Well, I am bound to tell the right hon. Gentleman that we have no confidence in him. Men judge by their experience, and our experience of the right hon. Gentleman makes the effort to regard him as a possible reformer or philanthropist an effort that defies the imagination. He will appoint as his associates men who have not the confidence of the people. I go further, and I venture to say that if he did appoint men who possessed the confidence of the people, these men would jeopardise the confidence by accepting nominations at his hands, seeing the policy which he is endeavouring to carry out. I hope for nothing from the new Board. The right hon. Gentleman avoids two points of the Irish question to which the Act could be usually applied. He puts aside the question of Irish harbours. [MR. A. J. BALFOUR dissented.] Well, he said there were harbours enough. Why, the coast of the West of Ireland is absolutely bare for want of harbours. The poor fishermen on the west coast of Ireland have not even boats for fishing. He callously ignores the wants of the West of Ireland. He proposes to sell seed oats and seed potatoes at cost price, and to place the men who buy them under the superintendence of a Government bailiff. He proposes to make himself a preceptor in the arts of spinning and weaving, and to teach them the taking of and curing of fish. They know how to take the fish and they will find out how to dispose of them. The question I have to ask is, to what the funds are to go in these congested districts? The first claim on the capital income will be the claim of the Land Purchase Scheme. One million and a half will be employed for all the default of the whole congested districts. Although the right hon. Gentleman is extremely clever, philanthropy requires money, and I tell him with regard to his philanthropy he will not be a success to start with. We want to see definite proposals. We want to see men to carry out these proposals, and I say that in the meantime the scheme is not one which demands our serious attention. With regard to the Purchase Scheme I shall ask three questions. Is it to deal equally with the tenants of Ireland? You have spent £10,000,000 of money in two years; you have made 20,000 proprietors. A million of money makes 2,000 proprietors. In that proportion £30,000,000 would make 80,000. When that operation is exhausted, when every penny of that £30,000,000 is exhausted, after your Bill has worked itself out, alongside the 80,000 purchasers who have purchased under your plan, there will still be six times as many subject to judicial or non-judicial rents, tenants who will be expected to make good the defaults of those who have purchased. One-sixth of the tenants will have become purchasers under the Act, and five-sixths will remain under a system which the Chief Secretary has denounced as a rotten system. These tenants will have to pay an excessive rent and also for the default. Does the Bill protect the purchaser? I have shown he is subject to coercion. I have shown he is in arrear. By the insertion of 20 years' purchase in the Bill you incite the landlord to strain up to that amount. By the provision to add two years arrears to the purchase money you suggest an easy way by which the 20 years can be obtained. There is still a more sinister provision of the Bill, because you provide that wherever a landlord can induce or compel a tenant to pay him directly a sum equal to one-fourth, then the landlord will need no guarantee deposit. I should think this is the case which needs most the guarantee deposit, because the tenant, by procuring from some other source the money needed to make the one-fourth, leaves himself less able to pay in the future. I say you deliberately create a standard of 25 years' purchase, 20 years from the State and five years from the tenant. You neither protect the State nor the tenant, and let me tell you that whatever protects the tenant purchaser protects the State, and whatever leaves the tenant unprotected exposes the State to risk. You might have erected a Land Department to ascertain that the thing sold showed value for the money given. That is a very simple rule. Have you done that? No, Sir. What you propose to enact is this, not that the interests of the landlords shall be value for the price, not that the thing shall be value for the money given, but that the holding, the interest of the landlord and the tenant put together shall be value for what? Not even for the price as a whole, but for a portion of the price, and whatever may be advanced by the State. Can any rational man insist that this policy is intended to secure the State? The Government must be well aware that the interest of the tenant in the holding may be pledged so deep that it is no security at all. The Government must be well aware that when a tenant gives a sum in addition to the State advance the means by which he procures that sum may render him unable to meet his obligation to the State. To this they are indifferent, and under the Bill they take no means to ascertain the fairness of the transaction or the security of the tenant. No, Sir, I tell you that the only valid guarantee is the guarantee of a fair price. If you have this guarantee you need none of the flimsy guarantees that have been introduced here. But if you ignore the necessity for a fair price, if you endeavour to extort an unfair price, then I tell you no cobweb of guarantees, however deftly woven, will ever avail to save you. Not only do you not protect the tenant purchaser, not only do you permit the landlord to get an extortionate price from him, but there is no limit to the price you allow him for his property, provided it is within double the value of the holdings. Not only that, but by this Bill you suggest it, you invite, you encourage it, you directly subsidise it by allowing him, when he extracts a high rate of purchase, to keep the guarantee from you. Does this Bill give real security to the State? The answer to that will be supplied by the answer to another question. Who will buy—will the solvent tenants buy? I emphatically say that they will not. The solvent tenants will see that the proper rate for State advance is $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and that you charge them 4 per cent., and I say that you will compel the solvent purchaser to make good the default of the insolvent. They will not consent to pay the taxes for such a policy. The solvent tenants will see that while the Ashbourne purchasers are only called upon to pay the purchase annuity, the purchasers under this Bill will have to pay 80 per cent. of the old rent. Your Bill provides an Assurance Fund which you do not mean as an assurance. They will see that, the liabilities of ownership taken into consideration, the relief will probably be so slight that they will be wise to wait a little longer; they will see that experience justifies them in waiting a little longer, and they will wait rather than bind themselves to a contract to the State which will be rigorously exacted. Every tenant in Ireland is shrewd enough to anticipate that before five years this Government will come to an end. With the Government, he thinks, the Act will come to an end. If it does not come to an end, no other Government will ever use its powers. The solvent tenants will generally agree that they had better use their independence and wait for a settlement upon a more equitable basis, and a more comprehensive scale which will certainly be proposed, either by the Liberal majority here or by an Irish Parliament in Ireland. How have you in your Bill treated the evicted tenants? You have shut them out, although you know that until these tenants are put back in their homes there will never be peace in Ireland. I tell you what class of tenants will purchase—the bogus tenants on the Campaign estates, and after they have bought, and when they have distributed the purchase money in a special sense not comtemplated by this Bill, these bold adventurers will end their agricultural career, and leave you in the lurch. The men who will buy under this Bill are not the solvent tenants, but the men in arrear, the men in debt, the men who will clutch at any raft to save themselves from drowning. They will consent, to escape eviction for a time by going through the form of purchase. Do you tell me there is any prospect of these men, now sunk in arrear, now struggling with debt, now endeavouring to pay their landlords, do you tell me that by giving them State money there is any prospect of greater saving or greater benefit? Repudiation has been spoken of. I do not think it necessary to speculate on repudiation, for without repudiation at all, your scheme contains in it the seeds of financial collapse. The Chief Secretary for Ireland put back the date of financial default until after five years. He postponed the inundation until his dykes were ready. But what if the inundation occurred before the dykes were built? Why, the first five years of the working of the scheme is the most critical period. I say such a casuality as might follow from a fall in prices, the succession of bad seasons, or even the occurrence of one, might place you in a position something short of universal bankruptcy. You say if the tenant fails to pay you have an Insurance Fund. The Insurance Fund is a myth. It will never exist. The landholders will run the price to 20 years' purchase money, and there will be no Insurance Fund. If the tenant purchaser fails to pay, then what have you to do to recover the defaulting debt? You will have to evict him from his holding. Have you considered the novel and dangerous phase of government that will arise in Ireland from the point of view of economy? You may say you have the landlords' guarantee. Let me point out the insidious character of this Bill. While the landlord's guarantee under Lord Ashbourne's Act is one-fifth, in this case the landlord's guarantee will be one-tenth, and, in case he can extract from the tenant one-fourth of the State advance, there will be no guarantee whatever. Moreover, under the Ashbourne Act the landlord's guarantee is a security for all default; in this case it is a security for only a half. You have to evict the holder. What will you do with the farm? You may try to let it, or you may manage it yourselves, or you may try to sell it. The right hon. Gentleman knows, or ought to know, that from the first moment of the operation of this Act the relations with regard to him between the Government and the community in Ireland will not be the ordinary relations of assent and support. They will be those of dissent and hostility. There will be from the first a strong, a general, I may say a universal, current of public feeling in reference to your Bill, in consequence of the odious and humiliating conditions attaching to it. You take Irish public money for private contracts, and the Irish people have no control over the funds you appropriate. That is a policy of brigandage. It will arouse against this Act from the first the passionate indignation of every self-respecting and independent man in Ireland. When you have evicted the tenant, what are you to do with the farm? The experience of the last 10 years should teach you. The Landlords' Association had many more facilities than you have had. Let me tell you you are in error if you are counting upon the assistance of the landlords after you pass this Act, because out of nine of the landlords you are leaving eight in the cold. The Landlords' Association, with all its facilities, with the aid of public funds—money contributed by their friends—undertook the management of farms, and there was not one of them that did not end in complete bankruptcy. Will the Government escape that fate? Will they try to manage the farms themselves? It will be interesting to see the Chief Secretary for Ireland getting down to the life of a small farmer. And not to the management of one small farm, which is comparatively easy, but 10,000 or 15,000. The right hon. Gentleman may do a great many things well, but he will not farm such holdings at a profit. The third alternative course is to sell the farm. He may try to sell it. Will he find anyone to buy it? I have conclusive reasons for anticipating that there would be a public feeling more strong and general in Ireland in opposition to this measure than to any previous measure dealing with the land question in this country. Will he be able to sell the farm? As there is only one person who is willing to buy it now, and that is the tenant, so then there will be only one person, and that will be the landlord. He may come back, and may buy it for a fraction of what he gave for it. He will then have the farm, and you will have neither the one nor the other. I leave you to imagine what the state of Ireland will be when a few of these landlords have re-entered their farms on these conditions, and what a prospect there is for peace or order until you have put them out again. Now, I come to the question of guarantee; I tell you that your Guarantee Fund is nothing better than a farce; it will never save a single sixpence which the State, without the fund, would lose. And if you come upon the Cash Fund what would be the effect? The moment you do so, the question enters upon the gravest possible phase. Every penny you take from the Cash Fund will be added to the Poor Rate in Ireland, and the Boards of Guardians will probably refuse to make the necessary call upon the rates. The immediate result of resorting to any portion of the cash fund will be that the whole of the Local Administration of the Poor Law in Ireland will be thrown on your hands. And how if you resort to the Contingent Fund? You will then have a still worse state of things. This proves the very absurdity of the position. No, you will never dare to do it. The people of England would never allow you to do it. They would never permit you to enter upon a policy which means nothing but the abdication by the Government of the primary functions of rule and control. If you resort to the Contingent Fund you will either have to close industrial schools, workhouse schools, and other institutions, and put a stop to primary education, or else make good the Local Debt; and I tell you that although you have force in Ireland you have not sufficient force in the British Empire to turn into cash a levy under such circumstances. The real argument in your minds for the insertion in this measure of these securities is that you will never have to use them. I tell you from my knowledge of Ireland, as an Irishman born and bred, that there is nothing more probable than that, considering the incitement the Bill offers to landlords to extort excessive prices, you will have to use both the Guarantee Fund and the Contingent Guarantee Fund, and whenever you try to apply them for the purpose you will be unable effectually to do so. I tell you you had better strike these flash securities out of your Bill. Those who have drawn up this scheme have proceeded, it seems to me, under two great misapprehensions—firstly, that Imperial Revenue from Ireland can always be relied upon as a matter of course; and, secondly, that Irishmen differ so much from Englishmen and Scotchmen, or any other nation on the surface of the globe, that a levy on their means, no matter how un-Constitutional or oppressive, will be met with the same submission. Upon these two misapprehensions rests the structure of your guarantee. Imperial Revenue from Ireland is mainly derived from the consumption of exciseable articles, and you may easily drive the people of Ireland to a point—and I think that certain aspects of thought in Ireland are in favour now of such a result—at which they may so limit the use of exciseable articles as to inflict on the Revenue a greater loss than the whole of the Guarantee Funds, and I have no doubt that a local levy would be impossible. The consequences which appear certain to follow your Bill by the mere operation of the Act itself will be a reduction of rent over five-sixths of Ireland to a level of the standard of the Bill. As I have said, if you descend to the guarantees you will have a movement adverse to the Imperial Revenue and a general strike against it. I deprecate and desire to avoid these consequences, and I offer you a warning in good time. If you take the warning, well and good; if you reject the warning you must take the consequences. As for myself, adhering, as I do, to the policy of the Land League days, a policy since adopted by both Imperial Parties, the policy of extinguishing dual ownership by enabling the tenant on fair terms to purchase his holding, and under safe conditions by the help of the credit of the State, nevertheless I oppose this Bill most heartily and without reserve; because this Bill ends nothing; because this Bill proposes to continue and perpetuate over five-sixths of Ireland the dual system under circumstances of aggravated danger; because this Bill introduces into an already troubled sphere fresh elements of discontent, and by consequence of disorder; because this Bill errs, and errs mortally, in my judgment, against every one of the conditions I regard as indispensable to the sound administration of any large measure of land purchase, and especially one that, like this, purports to be final.

*(7.31.) MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): Observation has been made upon the fact that no Irish Member has addressed the House from this side

during the Debate, but I can assure the hon. Member that it has not been because we have not been anxious to speak, but, unfortunately, up to the present we have been unable to obtain the opportunity. Every trumpet connected with the Party opposite has been in full blast, and we have had support of the Bill from the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner (Mr. Plunket); therefore, I hope the House will not deem it an undue intrusion on its patience if I, a Member representing an Irish Division, ask to be permitted to give an opinion, an opinion not so enthusiastically in favour of the Bill as other opinions expressed from both sides have been. I cordially agree with the criticism passed on the general tone of the Debate by the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Birrell) that hon. and right hon. Gentleman on either side have too much devoted themselves to exposing the inconsistencies of their political opponents. Their arguments have been directed sometimes to raising the cheers of Party spirit and sometimes to appealing to the cupidity of those outside the House whom they think they may attract to their support, but rarely and briefly to the consideration of the effect the Bill will probably have in Ireland. It is a matter of indifference to me as to which Front Bench the charge of inconsistency may best apply. The Bill introduced by the Government brings before us a system which does not come altogether before the House as an untried experiment, and what hon. Members have to do is not to determine whether the Government and their supporters are more or less inconsistent in their position, but whether the provisions of this measure will secure in Ireland all these advantages which are predicted for it. Now, the Bill happily differs from most other measures connected with Irish land which the House has had to discuss because its provisions may be fully discussed without imputing to the criticism they arouse a bias in favour either of the landlord or tenant. The provisions of the Bill applied to the development of peasant proprietorship naturally fall into two divisions, namely, facilities to be offered to the tenant to become purchaser and the terms offered by the State to the landlord who is the vendor. The tenant is enabled, under the Bill, without the expenditure of a single farthing, to become the owner of his farm at a price to which he must voluntarily consent, and which will not be less than a reduction of 20 per cent. on his present rent; the annual payment must not be less though it may be much more. I hold these to be liberal terms, and, what is more, I say that the great majority of tenants in Ireland have recognised that they are liberal terms, and that, as far as they are concerned, the Bill will be largely availed of. I know doubts are expressed by hon. Members below the Gangway on that point, and by the Member for Mid Lothian, and an attempt has been made to distingbish between the attitude of the northern tenants and the attitude of the tenants in other parts of Ireland on this question, and to turn certain isolated expressions in Ulster into evidence of general opposition to the Bill. I have had considerable opportunities during the Easter recess of becoming acquainted with the opinions of tenants belonging to all political parties in my neighbourhood, and I am led to a conclusion diametrically opposed to that stated the other day. If the terms proposed by the Bill with regard to the landlords were as satisfactory, or even within a measurable degree as liberal, as those offered to the tenant, I should be contented to give a silent vote in favour of the measure; but before I proceed to state my objections to it, I desire to express my regret that the Government had seen fit to depart from the dimensions of the Ashbourne Acts. The conditions connected with those Acts are, I will not say the only safe method, but one of the safest methods, to adopt in this class of legislation. The Government, however, for reasons for which they are entirely responsible, had determined to abandon the limited undertakings of those Acts, and had enormously increased the area of their operation; but that area is not exhausted. When the Government choose to abandon the gradual and limited development of peasant proprietorship they ought not to stop half-way. It is most unfair both to landlord and tenant. This Bill ought to have afforded facilities for a complete transfer of the land in Ireland. I may be told the Bill is limited by the securities available, Then I should prefer the limited progression of the Ashbourne Acts with which we are acquainted to the enormously increased possibilities of dissension, dispute, and disagreement which the Bill presents owing to the tender susceptibilities of the British taxpayer which the Government have been unable to remove entirely. I am unable to share the sanguine views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the hon. Member for South Tyrone. They appear to see in the future an agrarian millenium. Ireland is to become a terrestrial paradise, cultivated by model occupying owners. They also appear to think that the measure is final with regard to the abolition of landlordism, whereas, as a matter of fact, it is nothing of the sort. It is strictly limited in its effects. It only applies to the present race of landlords, and the term of the normal annuity will witness a gradual evolution of the landlord of the future from the 49th year old peasant proprietor. The Chancellor of the Exchequer believes that the condition of Ireland under the Act of 1881 is eminently unsatisfactory, and that dual ownership is ruinous to agriculture. That is the right hon. Gentleman's view, but it is not evidence on the question. The hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Wyndham) expressed the same view in a more rhetorical form, but with equal inaccuracy, when he described dual ownership as an infelicitous partnership. Now, I live in a province where our agricultural prosperity is founded on this cardinal feature of dual ownership, and this it was that induced Ulster Members to vote in favour of the legislation of 1881. On the Ulster estates, where the custom most nearly approximates to dual ownership, there the land is best farmed, there the tenants are in the most prosperous condition, and there the rents are best paid—landlord and tenants are equally benefited. The Chancellor of the Exchequer believes that agriculture in Ireland and land in Ireland has been ruined by dual ownership. All I can say is that, so far as I have been able to observe the effects of dual ownership upon certain estates in the North, where the Ulster custom is fully developed, it has produced a totally opposite result. The tenant under the dual ownership system protected by the salient points of the legislation of 1881 has farmed his land better, has put more capital into the development of the land, and has kept the land in far better condition than it would have been in some years ago. Advocate this Bill by any arguments you choose, but do not advocate it by condemning the system of dual ownership. In dealing with that subject the Cowper Committee reported that the grievances to which the tenants are liable in insecurity of tenure are entirely removed by the provisions of the Act of 1881, which gave fixity of tenure to every tenant who applied for a judicial term. Another salient feature of that Act is free sale, and throughout a great portion of Ireland free sale has been of great benefit to the tenant and is largely availed of, while fair rents have been fixed in nearly half the holdings in Ireland. The cry against dual ownership which has been taken advantage of by the Chancellor of the Exchequer is, in my opinion, an absolutely fictitious cry. It is a cry raised in Ireland by a small body of men who, 10 years ago, were the strongest advocates of its establishment. They do not object to dual ownership because it failed to secure the benefits they attributed to it in 1879-80, but they are now attributing to it certain demerits for the purpose of forcing forward compulsory purchase at low rents, and that is the real origin of the agitation in certain parts of Ulster. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he hoped that Bill would assist landlord and tenant, and said that it was introduced in the interests of the social and economical prosperity of Ireland. I understand the Chief Secretary said the Bill would bolster up the Irish land interest. I have endeavoured to understand what will be the position of an Irish landlord who consents to the full measure of the Bill. I find that the "bolstering-up" process will, in the most favourable view, deprive him of at least 55 per cent. of his income. The Government stated they have the interests of Ireland at heart, and the Government have announced, by its various organs, that it does not wish to expatriate the Irish landlords; and the hon. Member for Cork has also intimated that it would be desirable, in the interests of Ireland, that the Irish landlords should remain as residents in that country. The right hon.

Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1888, speaking on the Ashbourne Act of that year, said he did not desire to see the Irish landlords removed as a body, and that, as a class, he saw much in their conduct to admire. I am glad to be able to quote a favourable opinion of the right hon. Gentleman. He has sometimes criticised the Irish landlords severely, but I do him the justice to say he has never descended to that abuse of Irish landlords which sometimes appears in the speeches of the hon. Members for Derby and Newcastle. What are the terms offered by the Government who are so anxious to assist Irish tenants and landlords in laying the foundations of their social and economical prosperity in Ireland? They, in effect, say to the landlord, though your property be worth more than 20 years' purchase; though your tenant may be prepared to buy at 22 or 24 years' purchase; though you may be anxious to join the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his attempt to restore Irish land to a more fertile condition, you shall not be allowed to aid him in this object until you have consented to despoil yourself of three or four years' purchase. These are the terms proposed in the Bill, and they are terms which, I say, must force the Irish landlords either to refuse their concurrence in the benefits of the measure, or else must lead them to eke out their existence in a condition of poverty to which the term genteel cannot be applied. The Ashbourne Act did not err on the side of liberality; but that Act owed its great success to the fact that no restrictions were placed on the bargain between the landlord and tenant provided the security to the State for the advance was sufficient. The Government in the present Bill have attempted to do what is impossible with any regard to equity; they have attempted to define on a certain fixed principle the years upon which purchase shall be established. Any set of statistics taken from the records of the Irish Land Court will show that is impossible. I will give the figures from January, 1889, to March, 1890, the result of the sales in Ulster, Munster, and Connaught. In Ulster the average rental of the land sold was 9s. 6d. per acre, the price paid per acre was £8 12s., and the average time of purchase as 18 years. In Munster it was 14s., £11, and 15 years. In Connaught it was 10s. 2d., £8 6s., and 14 years. The excess of valuation over rent averaged in Ulster, 8d. per acre; and of rent over valuation in Munster, 5s. 2d; and in Connaught, 9d. Now, I contend—and I do not care from what point of view you look at it—that it is impossible from these figures to lay down any distinct and clear rule with regard to what may be a proper number of years' purchase or the figure at which land should be sold generally throughout the country, or indeed throughout a province, or even a single county. The scientific spoliation of Irish landlords commences here, but it does not finish here. It is after the vesting order has been made that the Irish landlord, whose income has been reduced by over one-third, is left to meet in full the charges and encumbrances which lie against his estate; and then, if he "walks off with the swag," as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle says——

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): No, I did not use that expression.

*MR. MACARTNEY: Then I will not attribute it to the right hon. Gentleman; but the phrase has been used. If the Irish landlord walks off at all, it will be lucky if the swag consists of a whole skin. I do not know what he will do in the future in his native country. I cannot conceive any other occupation remaining to him except that light industry which gave employment to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. [An hon. MEMBER: What! Tailoring?] We are told that the operation of the Bill is voluntary, and therefore no landlord need come under the injurious features I have mentioned. Yes, it is voluntary if it is inoperative; but if it becomes operative, it ceases to be voluntary: that is admitted by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The Act, then, becomes compulsory with all the worst features of compulsion about it. Just a word or two about the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. He came forward with a suggested Amendment and a concession, and I am bound to say the acceptance of the Amendment and the concession would be fatal to the Bill and much the worse for Ireland. He has suggested that the Bill should be confined to tenants whose valuations do not exceed £50. But to exclude from the Bill tenants over £50 valuation would be to fly directly in the face of the Report of the Cowper Commission, which went out of its way to specify these as the best subject for conversion into peasant proprietors. Then the concession of the right hon. Gentleman is to hand over to future County Councils the power of veto upon all transactions. Now, I have always advocated the establishment of Local Government in Ireland. I did so years ago in this House, but I am bound to say that to hand over to County Councils—I do not care in what part of Ireland—the difficult, delicate, and exciting topics connected with the transfer of land would be not only to destroy all chance of the successful operations of the Bill, but would also be fatally injurious to all chance of the County Councils being useful for any local administrative purpose. The right hon. Gentleman came down to the House in a spirit of concession and sacrifices. I have no objection to his sacrifices. I have no objection to his widening his phylacteries; but why does he not apply the principle of the Merchandise Marks Act, and if he wishes to make sacrifices, let him do so at the expense of his own constituencies, and not at the expense solely of Irish landlords? The Government desires that the landlords should remain in the country. But it is necessary, if they are to do so, that terms should be offered to them that will enable them to remain with advantage to the country. But what is the result of this Bill? The terms you offer the landlords are, I will not say ruinous, but such as will render it impossible for all landlords with incomes under £5,000 a year to remain with any advantage to public institutions, or to assist in carrying out that era of social prosperity to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer looks forward in the future. Individual landlords may be forced to sell whether the terms are equitable or not; you will then have driven them from the country and established in a limited number of farms, a limited number of occupying proprietors; you will have ruined the Church of Ireland; you will have driven out of the country a large number of gentlemen who in every district have done their best to promote local industries and local prosperity, and, after all, your Bill will not be a final settlement of the land question. You will have done this at the expense of every class in Ireland. You have made no provision in the Bill for the labourers upon whom, in a great measure, the prosperity of the country must depend. There is no attempt to secure for them the overflow of the benefits that are to be heaped upon the tenant farmers; the only clause that has any reference to this class is an absolute delusion, and can be of no material advantage to the Irish labourers. For this reason, if for no other, I cannot support the Bill. Undoubtedly, it is a measure which has been introduced with the best intentions; but as it utterly fails to exhibit any equitable regard, such as might reasonably have been expected, for the interests it proposes to benefit, I cannot go into the Lobby in support of the Bill. (8.0.)

(8.30.) Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): The speech of the hon. Member for South Antrim (Mr. Macartney) to which the House has just listened was one not only of marked ability, but of great significance. Speaking as he did on the part of the landlords of Ireland, his concurrent testimony with that of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), who spoke in the name of the tenants of Ireland against the Bill, is a remarkable and interesting fact. I hope that any right hon. Gentleman who may rise from the Government Bench will not tell us that the opposition of the hon. Member for South Antrim to the Bill is neutralised by the fact that the measure is also opposed on the part of the tenants; but I hope that he will take the view which, at all events, other people will take—that that combined opposition is sufficient to destroy the Bill. I do not rise to address the House on the details of the Bill as affecting Ireland. That is a subject which is much better left in the hands of persons more familiar with the details of the Irish land question than I am. I wish to say a few words from the point of view of a Representative of the British taxpayer; and I feel confident that in uttering these views I am not speaking for myself alone, but that the views are shared by a very large number of English Members; and the strength of the opinion I express is not to be measured by number of speeches which have been made in the Debate, but by the test we hope to be able to subject our opinions to, namely, the test of a vote. I do not ask the House to accept the principle that under no circumstances and under no conditions is it justifiable to use the credit of the State. It is not necessary for my purpose to take up so extreme a position; but I shall sufficiently prove the point to which I wish to draw attention if I show that all the good objects which can be obtained by the Land Purchase Bill could be obtained without it, and that all the advantages which can possibly be obtained by peasant proprietorship in the remote future may be equally or even better obtained by the measures applicable to the tenure of land in Ireland. It is not sufficient to say that the House is asked to vote a sum of £33,000,000. It is obvious that the advance from the State cannot end there. If this measure of land purchase succeeds—if the money is taken up—we shall still have from three-fourths to four-fifths of the land of Ireland to be dealt with, and in respect of which Parliament will be asked for additional money——

(8.36.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. HUNTER: The sum of £30,000,000 proposed by the Bill is not nearly sufficient for the purposes of a land purchase scheme in Ireland. It will necessarily follow that if the scheme is successful it will place one-fourth or one-fifth of the land of Ireland in the possession of the tenantry; and when that is accomplished, this House must be prepared to carry out the scheme of purchase to a much fuller extent. Although, nominally, the question before the House is a matter of £30,000,000, the real effect of the scheme will involve no less a sum than £150,000,000. It is not to be denied that this is a serious use to make of the credit of the State. It is no doubt a very attractive scheme that either Irish tenants or other persons should—by use of a sort of magic wand, by paying less money than they are now paying—become enormously richer; but I wish to point out that the credit of the State is destroyed by the very use of it in this case. The more we draw from the credit of the State the less remains for future use. The effect of this scheme of land purchase will not be as limited as hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to imagine. The effect will most certainly spread to England and Scotland, so that it may be taken for granted that the Government are embarking on a gigantic scheme of land speculation. This scheme will not only extend over one year or two years, but over the very extensive period of more than half a century. Now, if the House accepts the principle of this Bill creating a peasant proprietary for Ireland at the expense of the credit of the State, it will be found impossible to deny similar advantages to the tenant farmers of England and Scotland. I received a very clear lesson on this subject at the time of the General Election. I think my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the other Division of the City of Aberdeen will agree with me that there was no more unpopular measure in that constituency than the Land Purchase Act of 1886. But when I went to meetings in the County of Aberdeen I found a very different state of feeling existed. I found that my hon. Friend, who is now Member for East Aberdeenshire, appealed to the electors mainly on the ground of the Land Purchase Bill, and pointed out what a beautiful Act it was. If we pass a measure of this kind for Ireland we must also be prepared to grant an extensive measure of land purchase to England and Scotland. What reason could be suggested against this? I know of no reason why the farmers of Scotland should not have the same rights against the Exchequer as the farmers of Ireland. The only reason that can be assigned for the special treatment of Ireland is that they are killing the calf for the prodigal son. That is a very dangerous argument to use. We find in Scotland that no remedy could be given for the crofters until they had taken a leaf out of the Irish book and exhibited disregard for order. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham tells us that if there were an atom of risk to the British taxpayer he would not support the Bill. He seemed to be thinking of the risk that attaches to repudiation by the tenants, but there is also the risk of a future fall of value in the land of Ireland. It is impossible for anyone to say that that is not a contingency that may occur. How can the most prudent or the most experienced man venture to predict what will be the range of prices for 49 years and what will be the rents payable? Let us put ourselves back in the year 1840. Suppose in that year you had asked the most experienced agriculturalist in England to give you a sketch of the probable history of agriculture between the years 1840 and 1890, and to tell you the prices that would be received and the rents that would be paid. What an extraordinary prophecy he would have made! It would have been impossible for anyone to give a sketch, even approximating to the true state of the case. There, then, is an element of risk that must attach to all land purchase schemes. Before 49 years have elapsed, there may be such a change in the relative position of tillage farms and pasture farms as to entirely destroy the whole basis of calculation. Another objection is that you are converting that which is now rent into Consols. What is the result of that from an economic point of view? In the first place, of course, it necessarily involves absenteeism. But, in the second place, to those of us who look forward to a Home Rule Parliament, it presents itself under a much more serious aspect, because by turning rent into Consols you are depriving the future Legislative Assembly of Ireland of a sum approximating £10,000,000 a year, and that the most solid and certain part of the income of Ireland. That, to my mind, from a political point, is a circumstance not free from danger. The danger is less in the case of local rates, but it is a serious element in the financial calculations of Ireland, even if it does not have Home Rule, that you are taking away from all future taxation the power of rating that enormous amount of property. We have once more before us the old historical argument that in the past we in this country have done great injustice to the Irish tenants, and that we owe them some recompense. I admit the historical fact, but I deny that the course we ought to take is the course of handing over money to buy out the Irish landlords and relieve them of their bad bargains. All we owe to Ireland is justice. We owe it to the Irish tenants to protect them against unreasonable and excessive rents. When we have done that, we have done all that the obligations of the past can possibly impose upon us. We have heard, and very properly, a good deal about repudiation by the Irish tenants, but there is another repudiation which must not be left out of view, and that is the repudiation of the British taxpayer. Not very long ago I read in an article by Lord Derby a statement that, in his opinion, the time was not far distant when the National Debt of all nations of Europe would be in peril of repudiation. Lord Derby is known as a very sharp and keen man of business, and, looking with his placid gaze upon the future National Funds of Europe, he expresses that opinion. But observe the grounds of repudiation in this case. You are imposing this liability upon the taxpayers of Great Britain, not in accordance with their wishes or their mandate, but in express defiance of the mandate you received at the General Election. You have broken your trust. ["No, no!"] I do not say all, but the great majority of Members opposite obtained their seats in this House by declaring against the policy of pledging the credit of the British taxpayer to buy out the Irish landlords. When these gentlemen go back to their constituents what answer will they have when they are addressed by their constituents in these words, "False trustee, where are my millions?" If there is one thing more calculated than another to impair national credit and lead to repudiation, it is so gross and flagrant an instance of repudiation of your principles by yourselves. I wish to say one word with regard to the immense significance of the position taken up by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). He puts forward his plan as an alternative scheme to that of the Government. The scheme of the Government is to make one-fourth or one-fifth of the tenants into occupying owners, and to leave the rest where they are. The plan of the hon. Member for Cork is to have no occupying owners at the expense of the State, but to give all the tenants occupying ownership at reduced rents. In other words, the hon. Member has abandoned the pernicious doctrine of peasant proprietorship at the expense of the State, and I hail with delight the fact that he has done so. It is astonishing, after the experience we have had of the Land Act of 1881, that there should be any persons in this House who can imagine that the fixing of rents for a long period of time will be a solution of the Irish difficulty. By the Act of 1881 the rents were fixed, and before five years were over it was found that those rents could not be paid. What ground is there for supposing that the sums fixed under this Bill will 50 years hence be more easy to pay than those fixed under the Act of 1881? I heard with great gratification the observations of the hon. Member for South Antrim (Mr. Macartney) on the subject of what is erroneously described as "dual ownership." The words are an absurdity—a contradiction in terms. Joint ownership you can have, but you cannot have two hostile owners of the same property. The Act of 1881 did not create dual ownership. It reduced the landlord to the position of an annuitant with a charge which he could enforce on the land. He became nothing more or less than a rent-charger. The tenant was made, to all intents and purposes, an occupying owner for ever, with the power of free sale, and he was not to be charged more than a fair rent. I say that for agricultural purposes a perpetual tenure is superior to an ownership in fee simple, and that the status created by the Land Act of 1881 is for agricultural purposes a superior and better tenure than that now proposed. It has always been contended that the system prevailing in England and Scotland has this great advantage over the system of peasant proprietorship—that the former is able to employ the whole of his capital for farming purposes, the landlord providing what may be called the dead capital, which cannot possibly bear a high interest. We know that the profit on a farmer's capital must always be in excess of the profit on the landlord's capital to the extent of two or three times, or even a little more. For the purpose of illustration, let me take the case of a farmer with £300 and the choice of taking land on a secured tenure or buying. It is demonstrable that it is more to his interest to become a tenant than a landlord. Suppose he buys land at £20 an acre. For £200 he will get 10 acres, and the remaining £100 would just be sufficient to work the farm. Assuming that the farming interest is only twice the interest of the landlord's capital, he would then have £10 interest on his £200, and £10 on his farming capital, making £20 a year altogether. If, however, he could rent 30 acres at £200, he would make a profit of £30. We know perfectly well that in countries where peasant proprietors have come into existence their land is often heavily mortgaged. The perpetual tenure has this advantage, that though it is in the nature of a dual mortgage it is a mortgage which cannot be called in. Tenure for tenure, therefore, peasant proprietorship is a mistake, and perpetual tenure is the more profitable. When I hear what is called dual ownership exposed to ridicule, I ask myself whether the Chief Secretary ever heard of a place called India. Throughout the whole of India, with the exception of Bengal, what is called dual ownership has been for centuries a universal tenure. Everywhere the ryot, or tenant, is much in the same position as the Irish tenant under the Act of 1881. He has security of tenure; he occupies his property in permanence; he can sell his interest to the landlord, and he is subject to a fair rent, or rather to a fixed rent revisable once in a period of years. The principle on which rent is revised is that nothing shall be added on account of the tenant's improvements, and whatever additional value has accrued in consequence of those improvements is the secured property of the tenant. It is also true as a general proposition that from 2,500 years ago down to the present time a large portion of the soil of India has been farmed—where free men are concerned—on the principle of the perpetual tenure. In some cases these tenures have remained till the present day; but of course in the majority of instances, owing to the change in the value of money, the rent has become so small that it has ultimately been transformed into quit-rent and disappeared. Therefore, the notion that this perpetual tenure is an invention of recent date or is not warranted by experience is entirely erroneous. Let me now say a word on one other question. As against the policy of the Government I set up the policy of the Land Act of 1881. The failure of that Act was only partial, but to some extent undoubtedly it was a great failure. The cause of the failure was the sudden collapse of prices in 1886. The Act failed, in the first place, because the Healy Clause was emasculated, and because the Courts of Law succeeded in drawing a coach and six through it. It was also a failure because it had hardly come into operation when a Committee of the Lords was appointed,and the persons who were going to administer it were subjected to a searching cross-examination. The result was that fair rents were never fixed in Ireland. A fair rent is one in which the improvements made or inherited by the tenant are given to the tenant, and the interest of the landlord is given to the land lord. That was the principle of the Healy clause, which, if it had been left alone, would have given distinct guidance to the Commissioners. Having no suchguidance, what the Commissioners did was to reduce rents in cases where they were so high that they could not be paid and, to fix them at such a point that under the existing circumstances the tenants could pay them. Instead of establishing fair rents, they established only modified rack-rents. That error was made irremediable by the unfortunate 15 years clause. To these causes alone was due the failure of the Land Act of 1881. In my opinion, if the Government will act wisely, they will abandon all these nonsensical notions of converting the Irish tenants into peasant proprietors at the expense of the British workman, and will revise the Land Act of 1881, so that fair rents on sound and true principles can be established. If they take this course, the Irish difficulty will completely disappear. I was opposed to the principles and to some of the details of the Act of 1886, but I must candidly own that there were circumstances in 1886 which gave a justification for the introduction of a Purchase Act—circumstances which are now entirely wanting. At that time the failure of the Act of 1881 had become apparent. The Government proposed to hand Ireland over to the control of an Irish Parliament. Two evils had to be guarded against. First of all it was to be feared that the Irish Parliament would begin its work under great difficulties if the first subject they had to deal with was the fiery and thorny subject of landlord and tenant. On the other hand it was feared by some that, owing to the exasperation of feeling which many long years of controversy had excited, an Irish Legislative Assembly might do less than justice to the Irish landlords. But at the present moment these difficulties do not exist. The Government suppose that they will continue to govern Ireland, and the Irish landlords, therefore, have nothing to fear. You hold them in the hollow of your hand, and can see that justice is done to them. I cannot understand what has influenced the Government to raise this question, which divides everybody and unites no one, unless it be the case that coercion is a failure. The object of coercion is to collect rents. We are told that now everyone pays his rent, and peace and prosperity reigns in Ireland. Under these circumstances it is absurd to bring in this Bill. It must be remembered, also, that the Land Bill of 1886 had the hearty concurrence and support of the Irish people and the Irish Members. You are proposing to advance British money to people who, instead of thanking you for the gift, threaten you with repudiation. Again, the Bill of 1886 applied to the whole country, while this measure applies to only a portion of it. Under this Bill the English Government is a landlord or mortgagee; under the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian an Irish Government would have been the landlord or mortgagee. The guarantees are uncertain in this Bill, and are really based upon the principle of downright dishonesty. You take funds which do not belong to you, and say, "We shall hold these funds as security for certain persons' debts." It comes to this, that, without the consent of A, B, C, and D, you put down their names as sureties to a Bill which is due by E and F. Anything more utterly inconsistent with the most elementary notion of property or honesty it is impossible to conceive. How can you expect the people of Ireland to have any respect for a Bill which, in its fundamental clause, is based on a principle which I can only describe as petty larceny. Having opposed the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, I am not likely to give any support to a Bill which, in every particular, compares disadvantageously with the Bill of 1886.

(9.15.) MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): The hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) is against the principle of land purchase under any circumstances, but I understand him to express approval of the suggestions of the hon. Member for Cork. But the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork involved State liability.

MR. HUNTER: I expressed no approbation of that part of the hon. Gentleman's scheme.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: Then I misunderstood the hon. Member. He states that the Act of 1881 very properly reduced the landlord to the condition of a rent charger, but I should like to ask him whether, after having settled the rent-charge of an Irish landlord, let us say of £50 a year, he would secure to that landlord the receipt of the rent? Let us take the Ponsonby district. The question there is not one of high or low rent, but one of no rent at all, because in nearly every case there is from three to seven years' rent owing. Does the hon. Member agree that in a case where no rent-charge has been paid for three or seven years the State is to step in to secure the landlord or possessor of the rent-charge, or does he consider that the State is not to exercise any power or influence at all? If the State is to protect the rent charger, there is no protection but eviction. Certainly the hon. Member occupies the only legitimate position of opposition to this Bill. The proposals contained in the Bill have been criticised, and suggestions as to the purchase of land have been made, but there has been no real opposition offered to the Bill. While the opposition to the principle of purchase is an intelligible one, it applies to Great Britain as well as to Ireland. The hon. Member has said that, in 1886, the mandate of the British constituencies was against the purchase of Irish land at the risk of British credit. I contend it was nothing of the kind. I took a very active part in the elections of 1886, but I am far from being opposed to creating a peasant proprietary through British credit. Indeed that is what I have advocated all my life. I opposed the Bill of 1886 not on that ground, but because it was of a compulsory character. The tenant was compelled to buy his holding at a price dictated by the landlord, and the State was compelled to supply the money for the transaction. Then we had to face a possible liability not of £50,000,000, but of nearly £200,000,000. If the tenant had been compelled to buy at 20 years purchase, undoubtedly all the dangers would have arisen which the hon. Member fears under this Bill, for, within 12 months of the rejection of the Bill, every Member on the Front Opposition Bench declared that the 20 years purchase would have been based on rents 30 per cent. too high. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley) said that the rents were 50 per cent. too high. Therefore, if the Bill of 1886 had passed, the tenants would have been required to buy against their will instalments based on rents which, 12 months later, were declared to be from 30 to 50 per cent. too high. But then we were told by hon. Members who voted for the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, that even under those circumstances there would be no risk to the British taxpayer. Then, an Irish Parliament was to be created, with a separate Executive, and the administration of law and everything else to be placed in its hands. That Parliament might fairly have said, "We were not consulted about this liability; we were not in existence as a Parliament; indeed, while the Bill was passing through the English Parliament, the Irish Members protested that the rents were too high." You may rely upon it that that protest would have been taken advantage of if at any subsequent date the excessive instalments were brought in question. The tenant might have said, "I was not a party to the purchase; the landlord wished to sell, and I was compelled to buy at these exorbitant terms." Under the present Bill, however, the tenants' assent is necessary before the transaction can be carried out. When a man enters into a contract without any legal compulsion it is very difficult for him to find a reason for repudiation. But the objections I have stated were not the main objections to the Bill of 1886. The question of the principle of State aid was not brought before the constituencies when they condemned the Bill. The constituencies saw that, while a tremendous liability, with insufficient security, was to be undertaken, the Legislative Union was to be destroyed, and Ireland was to be turned into a colony or a tribute-paying province. No doubt, the Purchase Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was intended as a bribe to the landlords of Ireland, and I think it is greatly to their credit they did not accept it. I agreed with the promoters of the Bill of 1886 that if the landlords were to be put outside the protection of the Imperial Parliament the Bill was a necessity. I agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian that the Land Bill could not be separated from the Home Rule Bill; the two Bills are indissolubly bound up with one another. The mandate of the constituencies was in no way against the principle of purchase at the risk of British credit, but it was against the whole business. Much has been said concerning the securities under this Bill. Even supposing that any reasonable risk were contained in this Bill I would nevertheless vote for it, because I consider we owe a heavy debt to Ireland for ill-treatment and misgovernment in the past. But I maintain that there is no risk. The first security for the advances is to be found in the honesty of the Irish people; and it is curious to find the so-called friends of Ireland putting forward, not only the possibility, but the probability of wholesale repudiation. The opponents of these hon. Members bring no such charge, which is a slander on the Irish Nation. Go back as long as you like and you will not find any people who have been as good rent payers as the Irish. They paid their rents when they were iniquitous and high, and how, then, can we suppose they will repudiate their obligations when they are reasonable and fair, Take, also, all the purchases under various Acts. There has been no repudiation there, though there have been great incentives held out to repudiate. [*Cries of* "No."] Well, when I hear hon. Members say, as was said to-night, that they have paid because they were advised to pay, then I may take the converse and assume that if they had been advised not to pay they would have refused to pay. But I believe that in teaching repudiation hon. Members would fail. Was not the "no-rent" manifesto an attempt to prevent payment of rent, and did it not fail? There are, I know, certain corners in Ireland, for instance on the Ponsonby estate, where the people followed advice which no man with the elementary feeling and knowledge of common honesty ought to have given. The result of taking that advice has been that some 200 tenants have been persuaded to their ruin, and if the Plan of Campaign needed its death-blow that would be found in the result of the advice given to the Ponsonby tenants. We have, I say, no right to make use as an argument of a charge against a nation of wholesale repudiation. Strange it was to find the occupants of the Front Opposition Bench receiving this intention of repudiation with something like a cheer. They seem to have changed the political character of this side of the House, but I believe the political character of the people of England remains unchanged, and I am sure they will receive these threats of repudiation with regret. The first security then, I say, and that I think sufficient, is the honesty of the people of Ireland in the position in which the Bill seeks to put them. There are several other securities, but it will suffice to name one. The proposition in the Bill is that the sums retained by the Executive are, in capitalised value, to be equal to £33,000,000. Well, surely that is the highest form of security, cash in hand? I am not now speaking of the argument whether we ought to use this security or not, but, *qua* security, I do not know that you could have a better. The security is absolute, because, as was said by the Chief Secretary, if you receive £100 from an estate and pay it all back in contributions towards local purposes, then, if your tenants pay you, say only £90, you can easily recoup yourself by taking £10 off your local contributions. This is apart from the question whether it is right or wrong to retain the subventions, but as security their value cannot be questioned. That being so, let us get rid of all this talk about risk to the British taxpayer, for there is no risk when we have in our hands control of an amount equal to the amount of the advances. I hope it may never be that we may have to avail ourselves of this security, and I do not believe we ever shall, but, having this security, I say there cannot by any possibility be any loss to the British taxpayer, even though the Irish people should have the dishonesty, which I believe them incapable of, to repudiate their obligations. I was very much surprised to hear the hon. Member for Belfast say that the estimate of £30,000,000 would probably grow to £70,000,000. By some extraordinary calculation the hon. Gentleman arrived at this result, but I should have thought the elementary principle in the Bill is clear, providing that this sum shall not be exceeded, though it may be re-advanced as soon as it comes in. You might as well say that if you over-draw at your bank to the extent of £500, and, subsequently, having reduced it to £400, you again over-draw to £500, that you are increasing your liabilities. It is clear the British taxpayers will be liable to the extent of £33,000,000, and no more. I confess any doubts that have been raised in reference to this proposal are equally applicable to the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork. What the effect of the proposal of the hon. Member might be as a supplement to the Bill I do not now enter into, but, as an alternative, it has all the doubtful features that can be urged against the Government Bill, while it leaves every other difficulty connected with the system of tenure untouched. It leaves the basis and material for renewed agitation; it cannot leave such a satisfactory position as that in which a man is his own landlord. I do not see how any one can oppose the principle of the Bill unless he is an opponent of the principle of State purchase altogether. But go to any constituency in England, and put the question whether they are in favour of this principle of State assisted purchase as applied to England, and you will find a large preponderance of opinion in the affirmative. They know that only by such means can you prevent the migration from the rural districts into the towns, and the swamping of the labour market. They know that the only means to do this is by giving the people a career upon the land, and that this can only be brought about by the use of State credit. Nearly every nation in Europe has had to have recourse to this process, some for economic, some for social, and some for political reasons, and nearly all of them have seen the good results that flow from it. If the advice of our lamented Friend, John Bright, 20 years ago, had been taken and carried out we should not have had the difficulties in Ireland we now have to encounter. One good result of this policy will be the creation in Ireland of a middle class which does not exist there now, a class conservative in the best sense of the term and of enormous use to the country. I quite agree that the question of sub-letting must be carefully considered; we must be sure we are not creating a new set of landlords. Mortgage, too, is a danger to small properties which we must guard against; experience on the Continent shows us the danger. But I will not detain the House now on these matters. I wish hon. Members to recognise the social and economic effects that have resulted on the Continent from the adoption of proposals similar to these. In Prussia, at the beginning of this century, a complicated form of dual ownership existed, and with it discontent, disloyalty, and disorder. The whole country was in such an unsatisfactory state that the Government took the matter in hand and initiated legislation, converting tenants into owners by the use of State credit. By the operation of that legislation the people became stable, loyal, and contented; and those who have followed the history of this legislation know that although the landlord class opposed this legislation for reasons not difficult to understand, they have since fully recognised the advantage it has been to the country. It did not come about suddenly, it extended over years; this legislation associated with the names of Stein and Hardenberg. It is said that this legislation consolidated Germany and that it won the battle of Sadowa, and carried Germany through the war with France. It may be so; it laid the foundation, it created the material. I trust that the Government will persevere with the Bill. I do not believe that, much as they value the attempt they are now making to deal with the land question in Ireland, the Government are able to estimate the enormous advantages for good it will confer on the country. I believe that in connection with the other measures which the Government are to bring forward this measure will go a long way to remove discontent in Ireland, so far at least, as it affects the agrarian difficulty, on which the desire for Home Rule is based and through which it finds expression. The Government can pride themselves on the fact that they have, at least, made one real attempt, which I believe will be successful, to solve this great traditional problem of the land question in Ireland, upon which so many other difficulties hang.

*(9.45.) MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's Co., Ossory): It is impossible not to be struck with the difference in the manner in which this Debate is conducted from that of a Scotch Debate on an equally important subject. On a question of Scotch Local Government, for instance, the Debate is almost entirely confined to Scotch Members, and is prolonged until any Scotch Member who desires to do so has expressed his opinion. But here, on a question of intense interest to our country, we, the Irish Members, or at least the great majority of us, get no opportunity of expressing our views. I do not complain of English and Scotch Members taking part in the Debate, but, at least, I think the time of the Debate should be extended to allow of Irish Members taking part also. On Tuesday the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket), in his graceful speech, went very far a-field in defence of the Irish landlords, even going back to the great famine year of 1847. He quoted a passage from Mr. A. M. Sullivan's *New Ireland* defending the landlords from the charge of having done nothing to assist the famine-stricken people. But this is not the charge which the most intelligent readers of history have brought against the landlords. That charge is not that they neglected the people when the famine came, but that they had so raised rents and cut down wages that the great mass of the people had nothing to live on but one article of food, and when that failed, ruin and destitution came. My hon. Friend the Member for Cork in opposing this Bill has been accused by certain sections of the Press of inconsistency, because formerly the National League supported the idea of peasant proprietorship, but if he and we, who intend to vote against this Bill, needed a justification for the course we mean to take we might find it in the speeches of supporters of the Chief Secretary. The hon. Member for Dover, who writes the Chief Secretary's letters, in what was, upon the whole, a conciliatory speech, said that if we believed that the government of Ireland would be soon in our hands, we were justified in opposing the Bill. The hon. Member thought that an extremely improbable contingency, but we think it probable, and so thinking are justified in the eyes of the hon. Member. Again, the hon. Baronet who sits for North-West Sussex has said that he is not in love with the Bill, and that he would not vote for it if he did not believe it would be a final settlement. But does anybody believe this is a final settlement? It affects only one-fourth of the tenantry in the country, and the result will be that assuming the plan to work demands will be preferred by the remaining three-fourths for an extension of the principle of purchase. I am absolutely opposed to the use of one single penny of English credit or the payment of one penny of Irish money in buying out the Irish landlords. In former years John Stuart Mill wrote enthusiastically on the advantages of a peasant proprietary, but no man of equal intellectual eminence in these days would write in equally glowing terms. Mill spoke much of the advantages of the system of peasant proprietorship in France, Belgium, and the Rhenish Provinces of Prussia. But since then we have heard more of the trials and difficulties of these poor owners, and how the usurer has got among them, and they have had to mortgage their little holdings. Other ideals, as, for example, land nationalisation, have been put before the popular imagination, both in England and Ireland, and men care somewhat less than they formerly did for the ideal of a peasant proprietary. Again, the Land Bill of 1881, by the means of that which was described by its author as its one radical principle, the principle of valued rents, has done much in Ireland to weaken the demand for a peasant proprietary; and if the Healy clause had been worked as the Member for Mid Lothian intended, that demand would now

scarcely be heard at all. Furthermore, it is now fully realised that if the principle of buying out the landlords is to be carried out it must be done at enormous cost. I remember the unprincipled use which was made of this fact in the Election of 1886. I was in Wales, and I read a leaflet issued by the friends of hon. Gentlemen opposite, which asked:—

> "Do you want to pay more for your tea? Do you want to pay more for your 'baccy? Do you want to pay more for your beer?"

Yet here we have the right hon. Gentleman turning round and offering to pledge the credit of the British taxpayer to the extent of £33,000,000, with the prospect of a great deal more money being required. I object to the Bill because it is inadequate, and because it will not do what it ought really to try to do—namely, to tranquillise the disturbed districts. It is on estates where there is no disturbance that this Bill, like the Ashbourne Acts, will be utilised. There is nothing in it to secure that the landlords of estates which form centres of disturbance shall sell. Who is the nobleman who has taken the largest slice of the money advanced under the Ashbourne Acts. It is the Marquess of Bath, and I am not aware of any disturbance having taken place on his estate, or of any plan of campaign being put in force there. Again, the City companies have been selling their estates in the North of Ireland—a district which is always held up to us as a model of quietness and honesty, and a district where there is a due observance of contracts. Now I come to the proposals dealing with the congested districts, and I can say nothing more strongly condemnatory of them than the words used by the *Daily Express.* That Government organ has declared in reference to the clauses for consolidating holdings, and for assisting emigration and migration, that the great difficulty is to get the people to move, and unless you can do that, you cannot put the clauses into operation. As to the proposal to supply seed potatoes at cost price, including carriage and storage, I can already fancy the potatoes rotting in the storehouses before they reach the people; and there is something pathetic in the provision that officials shall be sent to the holdings of the tenants to see that the potatoes are planted, and not eaten. You will have the men of the Royal Irish Constabulary engaged in the work of spying upon the doings of these unfortunate people. As to the clauses dealing with the curing of fish, I see nothing is said about enabling the people first to catch the fish, and the recipe of the old cookery book to "first catch your hare before jugging it," applies in this case. Certainly there is no distinct provision for supplying the people with nets or boats. I see that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is to preside over the Board which will deal with the congested districts. The failure of the many Boards of which the right hon. Gentleman is at the head ought to have been a sufficient warning against creating any more Boards; while with regard to the extraordinary proposal to enable the Board to receive bequests and gifts of money in order to carry on its work, I can only say I should as soon think of presenting a gift to the Chief Secretary for the humane and Christian spirit in which he has carried on the work of coercion during the last three years, as I should of giving money to a Public Board in Ireland to be used for a charitable purpose. And now as to the contingent securities. It is said that they will never be wanted. From the paper which the Chief Secretary has placed in our hands it will be seen that while the capitalised value of the cash securities amounts only to £7,000,000, the capitalised value of the contingent securities amounts to £22,000,000. Why do the Government put the contingent securities in the Bill if they do not mean to use them? Among those contingent securities is money given for keeping children in industrial schools and money given for popular education. Now, I venture to say that the Government will not dare, in face of the world, to leave Ireland without the money which is due to her for these purposes simply because certain persons do not meet their obligations. We are told by the Chief Secretary that the provisions of the Bill are voluntary. I do not believe it in the least. I believe that unjust agreements will be forced on the tenants by the landlords on pain of eviction, and if agreements are made by the tenants lest they should be evicted there will be a moral leverage for repudiation, the importance of which cannot be over estimated. It has been asserted in the Unionist newspapers and on Unionist platforms that by passing this Bill, Home Rule will be got rid of. Any such expectation is a delusion. The people are devoted to their leaders, and at every public meeting the first resolution put demands legislative independence for Ireland. If anything could make me hesitate as to the vote I am about to give it would be a fear, which I trust is groundless, that if this Bill be defeated some future English Government will try to deal with the question. No settlement by the British Parliament can be final. No question of this magnitude can be shut out from the review of an Irish Legislature. It has been said that the question has been embittered by too many memories for it to be left to Ireland to solve; but those who so speak do not fully understand the generous and forgiving character of our people. We have no desire to get rid of the Irish landlords, for, in the future, Ireland will stand in need of all men of education, culture, and position, to do their duty in assisting in the government of the country. Because I believe this Bill will not provide a final settlement of the question, because I disapprove of the arrangements which it seeks to make for the congested districts, and because I am convinced the matter can best be dealt with by an Irish Parliament, I shall oppose the Second Reading of the Bill.

*(10.20) THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): Sir, in rising, as I do, towards the close of this long Debate, it is hardly necessary for me to say that I do not intend to refer to the numerous topics and arguments that have been addressed to the House in the course of this somewhat discursive discussion. I know the House has still to be addressed by some Members who have possibly a better claim to be heard on this subject than I have, and I think I shall be discussing the wishes of the House, as well as my own inclination, if I endeavour to confine myself to two or three points, and not attempt to travel into a general review of the discussion that has already taken place. Of the many objections that have been urged to this measure, there is, I think, only one which, if established, would necessarily be fatal to the passing of the Second Reading of this Bill—namely, the objection that is based on the supposed decision of the country at the last General Election. It is said that the country then decided that no Land Purchase Bill would be entertained that either involved any risk to the credit of the State or which established direct relations between the State and individual occupiers. If that objection could be established I admit that during the existence of the present Parliament, at least, it would be a conclusive objection to the Second Reading of the present Bill. But I am not prepared to admit that that objection can be made good. I fully admit that the judgment of the country at the General Election was final on two points—first, against the establishment in any shape of a separate Legislative Body in Ireland, and, secondly, against the measure of land purchase that was proposed by the Government of that day. That admission I am prepared to make, but I cannot extend it. I am not sure that I am prepared to go quite so far as my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. It is quite true that my right hon. Friend at the time of the General Election devoted a great deal more time than I did to the discussion of the Land Purchase scheme, while I applied myself to the examination and criticism of the legislative proposals of the Government with regard to Ireland contained in the other Bill. It is quite possible that my right hon. Friend, having, as I have said, devoted much more attention than I did to the land purchase proposals of the Government, may feel himself more deeply committed than I and many of my hon. Friends do. Speaking for myself, I am not prepared to analyse what was the exact effect of the decision of the country, save with regard to the two points I have mentioned. It is sufficient for me to know that the two measures, in the form in which they were presented by the late Government, were decisively, and, as I think, rightly rejected by the constituencies, and I am not prepared to admit that any mandate was given by the constituencies which could prevent this House from dealing with either of those subjects on principles different from, and in some respects opposed to, those on which the late Government proposed to deal with them. I deny that the objections, which we successfully

urged against the Land Purchase measure, were based either upon the proposal to pledge public credit for the purpose of increasing the number of occupying owners in Ireland or upon the inexpediency of establishing direct relations between the State and the purchasing tenants. The objections were founded mainly, if not entirely, on the nature of the security which the measure provided, for the security depended on the willingness of an Irish Government, not then in existence, to discharge their liabilities. It depended on the willingness of an Irish Parliament, hereafter to be created, to pledge the resources of Ireland for the re-payment of loans contracted without the consent of an existing Irish Legislature. I am quite aware that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian considers that he provided the most complete security for any loan which the British Exchequer might be called upon to make when he placed that security on the Irish national resources, but we held, and still hold, that by the arrangement the right hon. Gentleman raised international and political questions between the two countries which might endanger their amicable relations, and certainly did endanger the stability of the security on which the loans were to be advanced. We pointed out that the arrangement involved the collection of the instalments from the purchasing by agents of an Irish Government, entirely dependent on Irish public opinion, and that, in the event of the tenants being unable or unwilling to pay, the Irish Government would have thrown upon it the duty of imposing taxation in order to make good the default of the purchasing tenants. We argued that it would be easy for an Irish Opposition to protest against the engagements entered into in the name of the Irish nation. We argued that the question of repudiation of this debt, contracted without the knowledge of the Irish Parliament—before, indeed, that Parliament was called into existence—would be the most popular subject which an Irish Opposition could take up; and we pointed out that, in the event of that opposition being successful, there would have been no resource open to the Imperial Government of securing the repayment of those instalments, and enforcing the obligations entered into, except the resources of actual armed occupation of the country and the operations of actual war. Whatever objections can now be urged against this Bill are of a totally different character to that brought by us against the Bill of 1886. I do not for a moment say, and it was admitted by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that objections may not be made to any measure that can be proposed. Under this proposal no international question between the two countries can be raised. No international obligations are created, and no sources of international difference are set up, no temptation to international repudiation is given, and no political questions between the two countries are raised. The dealings under the Bill, whether they are wise or whether they are not, are dealings not between two States, but between the State and individuals. I am unable to see any inherent difficulty or risk or objection in placing the State in direct relation with the purchasing occupier. I deny altogether that the relations which will be set up under this Bill between the State and the purchasing occupier will be the relation of landlord and tenant. The relation which will be established under this Bill will be rather that of creditor and debtor. For my part, I see no inherent impossibility in the State collecting the instalments of a debt voluntarily incurred any more than I see any inherent difficulty in the collection by the State from individuals of taxes that have been imposed, not by the actual individual consent of every individual taxpayer, but by legislative enactment. At the very utmost, under this Bill, the dealing with the State will be not between nation and nation, but between the State and individuals. I will not deny that danger may arise of repudiation or attempted repudiation by counties of the liability that it sought to be imposed upon them by this Bill; but I think that the risk, if any risk attaches, will be infinitely less than that which would have arisen under the Bill proposed by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian in respect of dealings between nation and nation. That being the line of opposition which we took to the proposals of my right hon. Friend in 1886, I maintain without hesitation for myself, and I think I may say for my friends, that nothing we urged against that measure in 1886 can by any fair interpretation, or by anything other than a strained and unfair interpretation, be construed into a pledge to vote against a Bill founded on principles so absolutely dissimilar to that of 1886 as this measure. I believe that in this Debate very few hon. Members have taken exception to the objects at which this Bill aims. With the exception, perhaps, of the senior Member for Northampton and the right hon. Member for Derby, the number of hon. Members who have taken exception to the objects of this Bill has been extremely small. The right hon. Member for Derby has been, perhaps, the only Member of this House who took the position that this Bill was an unnecessary, gratuitous, and unwarranted interference with an admirable existing state of things. The right hon. Gentleman denied that there was any necessity for this attempt to convert the occupiers into the owners of their holdings. He is perfectly satisfied with the condition of dual ownership. He treats the question as one of rent only, and he says there is no reason whatever why we should interfere with the existing settlement of the land relations in Ireland. My right hon. Friend thinks that nothing can be more admirable than the system of dual ownership, but upon this condition—that one of the dual owners, that the owner of the fee simple, who has been hitherto supposed to have some title, at all events to have a voice at least in the settlement of the terms upon which he will let his land, is to have his rent not only fixed for him by a judicial tribunal, but my right hon. Friend is prepared to force him by law, if necessary, to reduce that rent so fixed whenever the other dual owner is dissatisfied with it. I must admit that this view of the Irish land question which is entertained by the right hon. Member for Derby has received no support from the leader of the Opposition. I do not think that there has been anything in what he has said upon this Bill which would prevent him from supporting a measure for the extinction and abolition of dual ownership if a measure for the purpose could be introduced, founded upon principles which would meet his approval. But I think we ought to hear something more from some of the right hon. Gentlemen who sit upon this Bench, perhaps from the right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. Morley), as to whether the right hon. Member for Derby is supported by them in the doctrines he has enunciated respecting dual ownership and the relations of dual owners to each other. It seems to me that the doctrines announced by the right hon. Member for Derby are doctrines which strike at the root of all private ownership in property. I should like to know from the right hon. Member for Newcastle whether he attaches any importance to rights which for centuries up to a recent date have been supposed to confer upon the owner of the fee simple the right to fix for himself the rent at which he will let his land to other persons, and which under the most recent enactments have permitted him to exercise, at all events, a voice in the terms on which his land was to be disposed of. I suppose it will be useless, in fact we know by experience that it will be, to remind the right hon. Member for Deby that these doctrines with respect to the excellence of dual ownership and in respect to the relations that exist, or ought to exist, in the future between dual owners are entirely of recent origin, and that they require a little more explanation and a little more defence than he has thought it necessary to give them. Not only once, but twice within a period of six years my right hon. Friend has himself been a party to a measure, the object of which was similar to the object of the Bill we are now discussing. In 1884 the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir G. Trevelyan) produced a measure for the purpose of largely intinguishing dual ownership, or, at all events, for the purpose of largely increasing the number of occupying proprietors. In 1886 the right hon. Member for Derby was a party to a measure of a much larger scope which would have placed in the hands of every landlord in Ireland the right to require the State to purchase his share in the dual ownership in the land. The measures to which my right hon. Friend was a party were measures the objects of which were similar to that of the Bill we are now discussing, but the means to be taken to carry into effect the objects of the measures were different, all the securities which were proposed were different. But the object of those measures was precisely identical with the present, namely, the extension of the system of occupying proprietorship and the gradual extinction of the system of dual ownership. My right hon. Friend treats this question as one of rent alone, but let us examine for a moment his position in that respect. Here or elsewhere my right hon. Friend has said that rents are either fair or unfair; if unfair the landlord ought to reduce them, but if fair there is no reason why the taxpayer of this country should incur any risk or liability, or should sanction the use of his credit for reducing what is now a fair rent. That argument is plausible, but it seems to contain a fallacy, and I wish it had fallen to someone better qualified than myself to dispose of that plausible logical fallacy. I think a very simple statement of the case will show to some extent, at all events, where the fallacy lies. Take the cases where a fair rent has been fixed, and where there is no difference of opinion between the parties as to the fairness of the rent. The landlord's position is this: He is getting a fair rent for his land, but he may think that he may lose by reason of a further fall in the value of agricultural produce, or he may doubt the solvency of his tenant or his successor, or he may dread further legislative interference with his rights as a landlord, or he may shrink from being exposed in the future to have recourse to the only method by which in the last resort he may exercise his legal rights, or he may dislike the prospect of being in future disputes with his tenant, and may desire to live at ease and in peace. For some or all of these considerations he may be willing, although the rent he is now exacting is a perfectly fair rent, to accept a capital sum which will not produce him a similar income, but which will relieve him from all risk and inconvenience. Take the case of a tenant under similar conditions: He may be perfectly willing to pay his fair rent, but he may be unwilling to incur the obligation to pay that rent for a long period, in addition to paying all the taxes which may now or may hereafter be imposed on the holding. He may be unwilling to bind himself punctually and without the prospect of any remission to pay that rent on a certain fixed day; still more he may be unwilling to lay out any capital for the permanent improvement of his holding unless he can obtain some present relief in consideration of which he would be prepared to undertake all those additional liabilities. Incidentally I might point to the fact that the advantages of this scheme are not so exclusively as has sometimes been supposed on the side of the tenant. It is quite true that the tenant will obtain a considerable immediate relief; but although the tenant obtains this advantage, there are also certain advantages which he surrenders and foregoes and certain liabilities which he undertakes. Under his present tenure he knows very well that if, through accident or misfortune or bad seasons, he is placed in a position of absolute inability to pay his rent, the great majority of the landlords will voluntarily, and the worst and hardest of landlords will, by the necessities of their position, be compelled to give him some reduction, or, at all events, some time in which to discharge his obligations. When he undertakes engagements under this Act he knows that no such consideration is possible; he knows that the reduced payment will have to be made upon a certain day, and that the State will not be in a position to give him that indulgence which he has obtained from his landlord and which he obtains under his present tenure. This consideration may be some consolation to those gentlemen on the other side of the House and to some on this side who have suddenly within the last few days taken the landlords under their protection. The unfortunate position in which the majority of the landlords of Ireland are going to be placed by the passing of this measure, when, as they tell us, a small minority of the tenants will be placed in a position of exceptional advantage, will make it absolutely impossible for the landlords who remain outside the operation of this Bill to exact the rents which they are now receiving. I say this is a matter of fair bargain and calculation between the two parties. Each side makes certain sacrifices and incurs certain liabilities, foregoes certain advantages and obtains certain advantages, and it is a bargain which the two parties may perfectly safely be left to settle between themselves. To return to the case I have been putting—the case of the landlord who, for reasons sufficient to himself, is anxious to sell and the tenant who under certain conditions is willing to buy. Supposing a capitalist comes forward, and being satisfied with the security which the two parties conjointly offer, proposes to advance a sum which will enable the rent of the landlord to be converted into a capital sum, and which will enable the relation of the tenant to be changed from that of an agricultural tenant to that of a debtor, owing a debt secured upon his holding—would there be anything inherently unreasonable in such an arrangement, although the effect of it should be a temporary loss of income to the landlord on the one hand and an immediate relief to the tenant on the other? And supposing, further, for reasons of State policy, that thinking, as all statesmen who have hitherto dealt with this question have thought, it is a desirable object of State policy to increase the number of occupying owners in Ireland, supposing the State comes forward and takes the place of this capitalist, is there anything inherently absurd in the proposal, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby seems to think, although it should involve a reduction of the rent which the landlord is at the present moment fairly receiving and the tenant is perfectly willing to pay? The fact is, this is not a question only of rent; it is a question of tenure, of security, of release from certain liabilities and risks on the part of the landlord on the one hand, and on the other a question of the assumption of certain liabilities for the future on the part of the tenant. Therefore it seems to me it involves a complete fallacy to treat the question as it has been treated by my right hon. Friend, as simply a matter of rent between the landlord and the tenant, which ought to be solved in the simple fashion of compelling the landlord, if the tenant is dissatisfied with his rent, to make a further legal reduction of rent. The arguments against this Bill have been so conflicting, so mutually destructive, that it is not a subject for surprise that any appearance of difference of opinion among the supporters of the measure should be eagerly welcomed by the Opposition. The speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham has been treated as a symptom of such difference or divergence of opinion. I cannot understand why any surprise should be felt or expressed at any of the suggestions which my right hon. Friend made in that speech. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby ridicules the land schemes which have from time to time been put forward by my right hon. Friend. If he has paid any attention to the subject he knows that the principal suggestion on which my right hon. Friend dwelt the other night has formed an essential feature of every one of these propositions. And when so many of the suggestions and ideas of my right hon. Friend have been adopted by Her Majesty's Government in the measure now before us it is not altogether unnatural that he should seek to induce the Government to adopt the remainder. But, Sir, important as have been the suggestions put forward by my right hon. Friend, I have not understood them, and I do not understand them as conditions which he seeks to impose on the Government as the price of his support. I rather understood them at the time, and I understand them now, as suggestions for possible amendments in Committee on the Bill, or even for adoption at some future time, and in some other measure. My right hon. Friend contended the other night, and I think successfully, that no practical risk to the British Exchequer was involved in the proposals of this Bill, and that therefore no pledges which the Unionist Party gave at the last Election have been violated by their supporters. He has contended, further, that the securities which are provided in this Bill are securities which may justly and reasonably be enforced, even against the protests of five-sixths of the Irish Members, who do not represent five-sixths of the Irish people. My right hon. Friend has simply suggested amendments in the machinery of the measure—amendments which, in his opinion, if adopted, ought to go far—he did not commit himself to say they would go far—to remove the hostility even of the Irish Members. He put them forward as amendments which, if adopted, would, in his opinion, meet the more reasonable objections which have been urged against this Bill by critics upon this side of the House—

criticisms such as have been put forward by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, founded on the want of popular consent to the measure and of popular ratification of the securities provided under it. I admit that it is quite open to my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby to urge that, holding these opinions, my right hon. Friend ought to insist either that a measure of Local Government in Ireland ought to be incorporated in the present Bill, or else that such a measure ought to precede the passing of it. That certainly is not my view, and I do not believe it to be the view of my right hon. Friend. It is obviously impossible to incorporate a Local Government Bill in a measure such as this, dealing as it does with so large a number of difficult, important, and complicated questions. There are strong arguments, in my opinion, why a large measure of land purchase ought reasonably to precede, and not to follow, a measure for the wide extension of Local Government in Ireland. I have often argued, and I think my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham has argued also, that the main, if not the only, obstacle to such a wide extension of Local self-Government in Ireland exists in that unfortunate antagonism of class and class, that unfortunate state of relations between occupier and owner in Ireland, which has been, in the opinion of most statesmen who have studied the state of Ireland, the cause of the unsettled condition of that country. We have both, I believe, argued that owing to the existence of that unfortunate antagonism and those unsettled relations it might reasonably, under present circumstances, be apprehended, that if large local powers were conferred on the occupying tenants of Ireland they might treat with something less than justice the rights of the minority. That obstacle which we have always admitted and recognised when we have discussed the question of the extension of Local Government in Ireland would be, if not altogether removed, at all events diminished and mitigated by any measure which should largely increase the number—with the possibility of increasing it still further—of occupying owners in Ireland; and we have always been of opinion that a large and effective measure with that object—the object aimed at by this Bill—was a necessary preliminary to any large measure giving extension of Local Government to Ireland. Well, Sir, I am not prepared now to discuss how far these two objects may soon, may even ultimately, be combined together; but I am convinced of this, that every step which we are enabled safely to take for the extension to a large number of persons in Ireland of the rights and responsibilities of full and uncontrolled ownership of property will remove one of the difficulties which stand in the way of the extension of local liberties and Local self-Government which we all desire to see in that country. I maintain, Sir, that these suggestions of my right hon. Friend have been made—and I think the fact is recognised by Her Majesty's Government—in no hostile or unfriendly spirit. These are questions eminently for discussion in Committee. When we are asked, as I think I have been asked to-night by the hon. Member for West Belfast, how the Liberal Unionists are going to vote on the Second Reading of this Bill, I have no hesitation in replying, and I believe I reply in the name of every Liberal Unionist in the House, that we are going to vote for the Second Reading of the Bill to the governing principles of which we are, almost every one of us, more or less committed, and which provides ample securities for the protection of the British Exchequer and of the British taxpayer, which we found eminently wanting in the measure we denounced in 1886. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian has told us that the hopes he had formed on this subject have been disappointed. He had hoped from the declarations of the Government that it might be possible to get out of the way this question of Irish land, and that such a removal from the sphere of our controversial politics would have formed no impediment to the realisation of his further ideas upon the subject of Irish Government; but his hopes were disappointed when he found that this measure in the first place was not welcomed, but was rejected by the great majority of the Irish Representatives. Sir, I must admit that for myself I have experienced no such disappointment. Although at the time of the introduction of this measure I was in a distant country, although I had no

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opportunities such as are enjoyed by my right hon. Friend of communication with the majority of the Irish Members, I think I should have ventured to prophesy, without any fear of my prediction being falsified, that no measure for this purpose, with these aims and objects, that could be proposed by the present Government, had any chance of acceptance by the Irish Members. I do not say this as a matter of charge or imputation against the majority of Irish Members—I fully recognise they have an object in view in their opinion of far greater importance than even the settlement of the Irish land question. They have in view—they do not disguise it from us—the establishment of Irish national independence; and one of the strongest weapons on which they rely for the attainment of that object is the unsettled state of the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland and the discontent, dissatisfaction, unrest, and disturbance created by those unsettled relations. I may point out to the House, Sir, that if this fact of Irish opposition is, as my right hon. Friend conceives it to be, a fatal bar in itself to any measure such as this, it is an equally fatal bar to any Imperial legislation short of Home Rule which can be proposed by any Government. I admit all the disadvantages under which we suffer from the want of the co-operation on questions of this kind of those who are entitled to speak with local knowledge, and who represent the local opinions and feelings of a large portion of the Irish people. But does the fact of our suffering under that disadvantage absolve us from all further duty towards Ireland, or from endeavouring to do what we can to the best of our knowledge to remedy admitted evils and admitted grievances? When we are asked whether we would attempt to pass such a measure as this for Scotland in the face of the opinion of the majority of the Scotch Members, I reply that opposition offered to such a measure for Scotland, coming as it would from Scotch Members, who accept the fundamental facts of the existing relations between the two countries, and who are prepared to sustain and not to destroy those relations, would be admitted and accepted by us as opposition to the measure founded on its merits alone. Unfortunately we cannot accept, we are unable to accept, the opposition proceeding from the Irish Members to this measure or to any other measure as being an opposition based only on the merits of the measure. We cannot forget, as I have already said, that the Irish Members are inspired, as they admit they are inspired, and they may be perfectly legitimately inspired, by other and greater, but ulterior objects. Therefore, when our object is, as I firmly believe it is, to legislate for the benefit of Ireland, to improve the material condition of Ireland, to extinguish, or at least to soften, the differences which have prevailed between the two great classes that are interested in the land of Ireland, and who are engaged in its chief industry—when we are thus engaged just as much as when our efforts have been directed to preserve for Ireland what we conceive to be the elementary advantages of the maintenance of order and of obedience to the law, we cannot permit our actions to be limited or altogether controlled by the action of the majority of the Irish Members. If we are to take into counsel, as I believe every Member of this House would desire we should take into counsel, the Members representing the majority of of the Irish people upon this question, if we are to work together for the regeneration of Ireland, it is necessary that we should have some common understanding as to the objects at which we are aiming, and the ends at which we are seeking to arrive. If we find that our objects are irreconcilable, if we find that the ends which we are striving to arrive at are not the same ends, but lie in different directions, then, with whatever regret, under whatever sense of difficulty we may feel, we cannot abandon the duty which we feel we owe to Ireland, as we do to every other part of the United Kingdom. We must work and do our best with the means which we admit are limited and imperfect—we must use the power which we undoubtedly possess to the best of our own judgment, and acting upon our own responsibility.

(11.15.) MR. J. MORLEY: I have listened, I admit, with some consternation to the speech of my noble Friend. If that speech has any meaning at all—and the noble Lord is not accustomed to speak without meaning—it is a declaration of war. I understand you won the last Election upon two points—one was no land purchase, and the other was the retention of the Irish Members. But what do you retain the Irish Members for? If the doctrine of the noble Lord is to apply, if his purposes are to be carried out, and if the opinion of the majority of the Irish people is to be disregarded, what is the advantage of the 85 Irish Members coming here? But in reference to the particular question which we are discussing to-night, I would call the attention of the House to this: that we are not merely disregarding the opinion of the 85 or 86 Irish Nationalist Members, but we are disregarding, as far as I have been able to gather, the opinion of the whole of the Representatives of Ireland. The noble Lord commenced his speech by saying that the Debate had been prolonged to a considerable length, and the other night the First Lord of the Treasury actually expected that the Debate would close in a couple of nights. What are we debating? We are debating the construction of a new Agrarian Code for a great province of this United Kingdom. Nobody knows better than the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland that the Agrarian Code goes to the very root of the national life in a country which lives by its agricultural produce. Not only, therefore, is the Bill, in itself, of the most profound and deep-reaching importance, but since its introduction large proposals have been made in addition to it. My hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) made a proposal which, with some reservations, which will probably deprive it of all efficacy, the Government have accepted. My hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) has made proposals in reference to the most difficult branch of the subject, I mean the congested districts, which, in themselves, open up large fields of Debate. I regret to have to point out to the House that in the course of the Debate upon a Bill of this kind, which goes to the root of the agrarian system in Ireland, not a single Representative of the Irish agricultural interest has expressed his approval of the measure. Where are the landlords? We have not heard the martial accents of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson), nor the winning speech of the hon. Member for North Antrim (Sir C. Lewis), nor a word in favour of this pacific legislation from the peace-maker, the Member for South Hunts (Mr. Smith-Barry.) The right hon. Member for West Birmingham rather scolded me the other night for something I had said from which he drew the inference that I disregarded the views of the Irish minority; but it is he and the Government whom he is supporting who are disregarding the views of the Irish minority. I do not know whether my right hon. Friend heard the very remarkable speech of the hon. Member for South Antrim (Mr. Macartney). That hon. Member, speaking with great moderation, informed the House of his inability to support the proposals of the Government, and he gave reasons which I wish my noble Friend had shown that he had some appreciation of when he supported the statement of the Chief Secretary that this was a measure of which the landlords could not complain. The Chief Secretary told us that the prestige and authority of the landlords would remain undiminished; but the hon. Member below the Gangway opposite says just the contrary. He says that your proposals must reduce all the landlords of Ireland having incomes under £5,000 a year to penury; that you will drive them out of the country; that you will ruin the Church of England in Ireland; that your Bill will not be final; and that you will do all this, which he, and I presume my noble Friend also, regards as mischief at the expense of every class in Ireland. My noble Friend said a great deal about dual ownership. Listening to him, I could not have supposed, if I had not known him before, that he was a Member of the Government that in 1881 established the system of dual ownership in Ireland. My noble Friend could not have heard the hon. Member for South Antrim declare that dual ownership was the foundation of the prosperity of Ulster. The Act of 1881, in which my noble Friend was concerned, was founded on the Ulster custom, and the Ulster custom depends upon and is, in fact, dual ownership. But that is not all. Does this Bill which my noble Friend has just recommended to the House get rid of dual ownership? No; dual ownership is as sure to revive under this Bill as it is certain the sun will rise in the heavens to-morrow morning. Of course, if you give this immense boon to a certain class of tenants a great many will avail themselves of it in order to place themselves in the position of landlords. You cannot prevent it, because you permit sub-division and sub-letting with the consent of the Land Department. Then you are leaving untouched by this Bill three-fourths or four-fifths of Ireland. You are leaving four-fifths of the Irish tenants either actually or potentially in that very position of dual ownership which my noble Friend declares it to be the object of the measure to abolish. I would call attention to my noble Friend's remarks upon the proposal of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham with reference to Local Government. My noble Friend seemed to say that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham had simply expressed a kind of pious opinion that some day or other it might be expedient to give Ireland the same kind of County Councils that we have in England and Scotland and to intrust to those Councils the administration of this measure. But I did not understand my right hon. Friend to express only a pious opinion upon this subject. He said that to impose liability upon ratepayers who had not a voice in the matter was thoroughly unjust, and that if such a thing were attempted in the Municipality which he knows so well—namely, Birmingham—it would produce a very pretty kettle of fish. It is for my right hon. Friend and the noble Marquess and the Chief Secretary to settle the Unionist theory amongst themselves. I will only say that I listened with considerable admiration to that portion of my right hon. Friend's speech, in which he showed the essential connection between the creation of Local Authorities and the working of this measure. It is a disappointment to us and a surprise that he has not been able, in the phrase of my noble Friend, to impose his opinion upon the Government. I wonder what the Chairman of Ways and Means thinks of the proposal of the Government. He has, again and again, told his constituents that the creation of Local Government ought to precede a Land Purchase Bill. But to-night the noble Lord, his leader, says that Land Purchase ought to precede, and not to follow, Local Government. The argument of my noble Friend, which has weighed with the Government and has led them to throw over the counsels of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, if it is good for anything at all, is an argument for 10 or 20 years, or for a whole generation. The Chief Secretary himself used language which seemed equally to close the door of hope in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman said the reason why the Government do not now bring in a scheme of Local Government for Ireland is that Ireland is not now in a normal condition. When has Ireland been in a normal condition? When is it likely to be so? You have had four years of "firm and resolute Government;" are we to wait 16 years longer before the "normal" time will arrive? I do hope the Liberal Unionists—though they are a very impenitent class—who have pledged themselves to the extension of Local Government, will mark the words of the Chief Secretary, that Ireland cannot have an extension of Local Government, such as has been given to England and Scotland, until she has arrived within normal conditions.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I never said that. I said that I saw great difficulty in giving particular powers suggested to the County Councils until Ireland was in a normal condition; and I observed that no powers of the kind indicated have been given to County Councils either in England or Scotland.

MR. J. MORLEY: I wonder what the English or the Scotch County Councils would say if they were informed that, although a full extension of Local Government had been made, their rates might be pledged without their consent. It comes to this: that the extension of Local Government to Ireland, when the normal time arrives, is to be on such lines that it will be wholly unlike what has been given to Scotland and England, for it would be revolting to the minds of Englishmen that they were to have their credit pledged and their rates pledged without their having yea or nay to say in the matter. That is the scheme of Local Government which we have to look forward to from Her Majesty's Government when they think the normal time has come. A good deal has been said as to the difference between this Bill and the Bill of 1886. I notice rather a curious discrepancy between my noble Friend and the Chief Secretary, because my noble Friend said the principles of the Bill of 1870 were entirely opposed to those of the Bill of 1886, and the Chief Secretary said both Bills were, in fact, drawn upon the same lines, and that there was nothing essential or vital in the Bill of 1886 which we might not equally find and equally accept in the Bill of 1890. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR dissented.] I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that or something like it. We are told truly enough that the Bill of 1886 is dead, and at this moment I am not called upon to defend it, although I am quite ready to do so when a convenient time occurs. I fought my election in 1886 upon both the Home Rule Bill and the Land Purchase Bill; I never shirked the Bill of 1886. I am not now defending what happened in 1886, or talking about our consistency; but I merely wish to say that I found in the Bill of 1886 two vital principles, and that if they had been incorporated in this Bill I should have had some difficulty in resisting it. But those principles are not in the Bill of 1890. The first of these principles was that the British Exchequer should not come into direct contact with the individual debtor. In his speech to-night the right hon. Gentleman declared that we spoke of a buffer between the British Exchequer and the individual purchaser in Ireland. But the right hon. Gentleman was under a complete misapprehension, if he will allow me to say so. We laid down the principle that only an Irish authority, backed up by the general Irish nation, can enforce remedies that are indispensable to security for advances. In the Bill of 1886 there was no chance of communication between the British Exchequer and the individual Irish debtor.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear!

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not going to quarrel about the metaphor, but the word "buffer" is absolutely inapplicable; and when the right hon. Gentleman recommends this Bill because, amongst other grounds, it makes the British Exchequer the direct creditor of the individual debtor in Ireland, I say this Bill does that which the Bill of 1886 carefully, scrupulously, and systematically avoided doing. Then the Bill of 1886 contained in a distinct and perfect form this principle, without which I will never vote for a Land Purchase Bill: the condition that the benefit of the use of British credit should not be confined exclusively to the Irish landlords, and to a certain section of what I call privileged tenants. I said in Debate in 1888, upon the renewal of Lord Ashbourne's Act, that if resort was to be made on a great scale to Imperial credit, we were bound to see that the benefits accruing from it should not be absolutely confined to one or two sets of individuals who were not numerous, but that they ought to be shared by all taxpayers. That was a fundamental principle of the Bill of 1886; and I recall it because the omission of that principle is my main reason for objecting to this Bill. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, in introducing the Bill of 1886, said—and as we are likely to bear much of this controversy the House may not think I am unnecessarily taking up time in reading this passage—

> "We are not acting simply for the interest of the Irish tenant. We are acting for the interests of the Irish labourer and the Irish community, and it is our duty, if Great Britain is to make an effort by the use of her credit to bring about an improved state of things—it is our duty to leave some fair proportion of the resulting profit to be for the advantage of Ireland at large in case the whole of these transactions should go forward. The sum to become subject to the discretion of the Irish State Authority would not be much less than £400,000 a year.

Therefore, under the Bill of 1886, if the transaction had gone forward, whatever might be said against it, at least there was this to be said for the use of British credit which is not to be said for the Bill of 1890; that a sum within the operation of that Bill—about £20,000,000—would have gone to general Irish purposes in the discretion of the Irish Government as a consequence of the resort to British credit. That made a most important and most vital difference. The objections to Imperial credit are almost insuperable in the minds of a large section of the public, and they can only be overcome, if they are to be overcome, on one condition—that it is a boon to Ireland as a whole and that the Irish Authorities directly enjoy some portion of it. I cannot justify Imperial credit being used for the benefit of Ireland under the principles of this Bill. The Bill of 1886 was a purchase Bill and much more—it was a Bill for helping the Irish taxpayer and for smoothing the work of the Irish Government. But the Bill now before the House not only fails to leave any portion for the benefit of Ireland at large, but it actually perpetrates the absurdity of imposing upon Ireland at large a general liability in order that a favoured section of Irishmen may enjoy particular benefits. We are talking upstairs on a certain Committee, of which I am a Member, of the waste that took place years ago when we allowed the colonies to make away with land, but that waste was as nothing as compared with the waste you are making yourselves parties to—a waste of something that is quite as valuable as land or anything else. You are throwing away precisely as our ancestors did a great opportunity of using State credit for great public purposes. You will not get clear of this experiment of yours for less than £100,000,000, and for that you will get very little advantage, and I think it very doubtful whether you have any guarantees for even that little. I am not going to say very much about the guarantees because I think their illusory nature has been pretty fully exposed already, but I was surprised at the tone the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary took in talking about the funds which constitute the guarantees. He talked of them as though they were funds passing between a donor and a donee. Those funds are no such thing. They are funds in a partnership fund which are contributed by Ireland for Imperial purposes. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR shook his head.] Does the right hon. Gentleman really contend by his gesture that those funds are contributed to the Imperial Exchequer by Ireland for the purpose of enabling a certain number of Irish tenants to be made owners? No. They are contributed for Imperial purposes, and if you hypothecate them for a purpose not Imperial but local, and even personal, you are clearly inflicting a great wrong upon Ireland, and committing what the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) calls an act of brigandage. This is a matter where repudiation may take place. I would like to say a word about repudiation. I do not myself believe that the Irish tenants who purchase their holdings are at all likely to commit themselves to a policy of impudent, fraudulent, wholesale repudiation, for I do not think that the Irish tenant is either a fool or a rogue. [*Ministerial cheers.*] You cheer now when I say that, but what have you been saying for the last four years, both in this House and all over the country? In the Debate on the Report of the Judges what have you been saying except that the Irish tenants are a parcel of rebels and swindlers and the dupes of agitators. [*Cries of* "No—victims !"] This very night the Chief Secretary said that there had been driven into the fibre of the Irish peasantry the notion that to get rid of their obligations was a very great boon.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear.

MR. J. MORLEY: Well, but those are the men whom you regard in this Bill as perfectly honest and incapable of breaking a bargain. Those men who have been so deteriorated are the men to whom some Chief Secretary will have to lend £100,000,000 of British money. This is a kind of inconsistency which seems to me to deprive of its value the defence which the Chief Secretary has set up for the policy of the present Bill. I do not myself apprehend wholesale and fraudulent repudiation, but I do apprehend two things. First, with regard to the purchaser himself, he will, no doubt, be subject, as farmers in Ireland are from time to time, to scarcity, and will be pinched for his rent. On the other hand, the Irish farmer is no longer what he used to be; he is no longer a creature, a serf, who will be content with the potatoes and salt which his landlord chooses to leave him. He is—chiefly, I believe, through the influence of the National League and the Land League—[*cheers and cries of* "Oh!"]—yes, you can call it a criminal conspiracy if you please, but I say that the National League and the Land League, whatever mischief and harm there may have been—and there was plenty of mischief and harm—by their operation have produced one good result at any rate—that the Irish tenant is now able to stand up erect; and he has been so unreasonable as to set up for himself a standard of comfort from which you will not easily drive him, and from which no man ought to wish to drive him. Well, the Irish purchaser, determined not to lower the decent standard of comfort at which he has arrived, will perhaps throw himself, when he is pinched, not upon repudiation, but upon some of the clauses which have been inserted in this Bill, which as I read them amount almost to a direct invitation to the purchaser to plead that he has been subjected to some exceptional calamity. On this head I should like to ask the Chief Secretary—I did not like to interrupt him in his speech, but it is an important point which even now he may deal with—whether the Government intend, when there is default, to resort at once, and in the first instance, to their legal remedies before they fall back upon the Guarantee Fund?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I suppose that that would depend upon the circumstances in which the default occurs.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not blame the right hon. Gentleman for making that answer. I know what the difficulties are which he will have to face, and it is those difficulties that make me absolutely distrust the policy of this Bill. He admits that when there is default he will have to consider, in each individual case, whether or not he ought to enforce the legal remedies. Therefore it is a matter, I may say, of accident whether or not the legal remedies shall be put into force before the Guarantee Fund is to make good the default. I submit that that exposes a fatal weakness in the whole policy which this Bill is to carry out. I think that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway will say that if the Irish tenant thinks that there is a chance of squeezing his landlord, like most of us, he is very likely to take the opportunity of doing it. Now, the Chief Secretary in what he has said to-night—and it is shown in the clauses of the Bill—admits that in each case there will be a possible opening to the tenant of squeezing the State and calling upon the sureties to make good his default. Therefore, I submit to the House that it is utter folly and infatuation for the British Government to attempt to enforce the remedies. It is only a native Government and a national Government, with all the force of Irish opinion behind it, that can secure a strict enforcement of the law. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other night that the Irish Government would perhaps have to evict and use the battering ram. It may be so; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows the incidents of European history, and does he mean to tell me that the brigands in Sicily who have been absolutely put down by the national Government could have been put down as easily by the Bourbons? My right hon. Friend knows well that it was because theirs was a foreign Government they could not put the law into force, and immediately the Government became a national Government it became perfectly possible, and so it will be in regard to enforcing the remedies in this case. On the point of repudiation I say that what you have to look forward to is not repudiation by the tenant; what you have to look forward to is, especially after what we have heard from gentlemen from Ireland in this Debate, is repudiation—and I do not say that it is very wrong—by the Irish counties of those liabilities which you have thus imposed upon them. I cannot see upon what principle you are to expect Irish ratepayers and Irish taxpayers to bear a burden for the sake of other people to which they have not consented, and which their Constitutional Representatives repudiate in this House and warn you they will repudiate in Ireland. I should like to say one word about the congested districts. The Government were congratulated by the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) upon having faced the difficulties of this question. I submit that they have not attempted in any real sense to face the difficulties of it; and I think that even hon. Gentlemen opposite who listened to my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), when he was speaking on a question which he knows so well, could not help feeling the contrast between the language of the Chief Secretary and that of the hon. Member, as the language of an amateur and a dilettante on the one hand, as compared with that of a man thoroughly versed in his subject on the other. I think that this must have impressed hon. Gentlemen opposite, and I cannot imagine a stronger argument for Home Rule, stronger than any abstract argument, than the contrast between the intimacy which my hon.

Friend showed with this difficult and perplexing subject and the want of intimacy shown by the Chief Secretary, though I am sure the Chief Secretary has done all that industry could do to acquire a full knowledge of the subject. I may as illustration refer to an incident, within my own experience, when I was Chief Secretary. I had to bring in a measure which was not at all successful for the relief of the districts affected by this part of the Bill. I will not go into the history of where the mistake lay; but this I do say, that I had good reason for not taking the advice of the hon. Member for Mayo, but if I had taken his advice that measure would have been much more prosperous and successful than it unfortunately happened to be. I predict that everything that is done by the Congested Districts Board—of which the Chief Secretary is to be the Chairman or President—will have as melancholy a fate as the things that were done under the Relief Act which was passed in 1886. We have heard to-night from the Chief Secretary that the Government do not rely on emigration for the amalgamation of holdings. I want to call attention to this, because I know that in many quarters of the House emigration has been regarded as a solution of the problem of the congested districts. I will direct the notice of the House to one fact on this point, and one only—that in spite of all the emigration that took place during a considerable number of years in the districts which were scheduled in the Relief Act of 1886, which forms a large portion of the congested districts part of this Bill, the population rather increased than decreased. And not only so, but, what is perhaps better known, those who emigrated were the young and able-bodied, and those who were left behind were the old and feeble, and thus was prevented that very consolidation of holdings which the Chief Secretary now professes to desire. This Congested Districts Board with a changing Chief Secretary—for Chief Secretaries will change, even if the very magnanimous proposals of the hon. Member for Mayo be accepted, and a majority of Irish Members are placed on it, even then I doubt, subject as the Board must be to Dublin Castle, whether it will successfully effect the purpose the Chief Secretary has in mind. These districts will need 25 years—nay, 50 years, it may be—of skilful, patient, vigilant, persistent attention, and the men who will fulfil this condition must have the confidence of the Irish people, they must have the friendship of the Catholic Church, and the general public opinion of the country at their back. They must be men whose whole character, interest, and reputation are bound up in bringing about an improvement. Even then, and I am sure hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway will agree with me, the task will be one of enormous difficulty. As it is, the Chief Secretary may depend upon it that he has entered upon, and is endeavouring to induce the House to enter upon, a course which will produce none of the results he so sanguinely desires. As to the composition of the Land Department, which is the third part of the Bill, the hon. Member for West Belfast has, perhaps, said as much about it as it is necessary to say; but in all the glorious history of waste, extravagance, and prodigality in Irish administration this third department of the Bill caps it all. The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland Bill was a remarkable specimen of extravagance and prodigality. We resisted that Bill with success, and so I hope we shall resist almost the whole of the third part of this Bill. Four Judges are to be appointed at salaries amounting to £12,000 a year. These are gentlemen who were appointed at high salaries because the appointments were temporary, and who are to have higher salaries now because their appointments are not temporary. There is no earthly reason, I say, why one of the Irish Judges of the Supreme Court—who, as everybody who has thought for a moment on the subject is aware, are the most extraordinarily over-paid and under-worked men in the service of the Queen—should not be called upon to hear appeals, and why the work of the whole department should not be done by two Judicial Commissioners. The right hon. Gentleman hopes that this Bill will produce peace and order in Ireland and prepare the people for a normal time. I am assured, and I am the more assured after what I have heard from the hon. Member for South Antrim, that in every direction it will cover the land with confusion.

You will have round every estate which is to be sold a ring of tenants whose landlords do not sell; and I will read an extract from the statement of a deputation of Ulster tenants who waited upon the Chief Secretary in October last year on the subject of this Bill, which was then expected. They said—

> "Where the Ashbourne Act does come into play it has no doubt set up centres of peace and prosperity, but they become centres of envy and discontent to those who are unable to obtain the benefits of its provisions;"

and they added that they looked forward with apprehension in the future to the spread of agitation and discontent in the country. That was the warning addressed by the Ulster Tenants' Association to the Chief Secretary; but, in spite of that warning, he has proceeded in the course which they deprecated. Therefore, we may reasonably expect that the results predicted by the so-called party of law and order in Ireland are sure to come. Sir, the Irish landlords will perhaps now realise whether they can suffer anything worse from a Home Rule Parliament. At all events, the hon. Member for South Antrim has attributed to the operation of the Bill results as bad to Irish landlords as any which an Irish Parliament could inflict upon them. Depend upon it, no Bill can do any good to Ireland which on its introduction to this House is repudiated by every section of Irish opinion, whether it be the representatives of the landlords or the representatives of the tenants, whether it be the representatives of the so-called party of order, or the representatives of the Nationalists. On these grounds, and apart from other grounds which touch us more particularly as English taxpayers, and because I believe that the Bill will increase confusion in Ireland, will remedy no evils, but will create new evils, I shall without any hesitation vote against the Second Reading.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I will only detain the House a moment. I wish to express an opinion entertained by several Members on this side of the House. Speaking for the Member for South Buckinghamshire

Mr. J. Morley

(Viscount Curzon) and myself we shall vote for the Bill as an attempt on the part of Her Majesty's Government to deal with a difficult subject; but we shall entirely reserve to ourselves full liberty to endeavour to amend the Bill in Committee in many great and material particulars.

(12.10.) The House divided:—Ayes 348; Noes 268.—(Div. List, No. 66.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday next.

MR. SEXTON: Can the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury give us any indication of the further progress of the Bill? Will the Tithe Bill be taken before further progress is made with the Land Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I presume that the date now fixed for the further stage of the Bill is only *pro formâ*, and that we shall receive notice before the Bill is really taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Certainly.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Are we to understand that the Committee on the Tithe Bill will be absolutely concluded before Committee on the Land Bill is taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have already stated that Committee on the Tithe Bill will precede Committee on the Land Bill.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Yes; but surely we are entitled to an answer to this plain question, whether it is intended that the Committee on the Tithe Bill shall be concluded before the Committee on the Land Bill commences?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have stated that the Committee on the Tithe Bill will precede Committee on the Land Bill. I have also stated, in answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, that ample notice will be given of when it is proposed to take Committee on the Land Purchase Bill. I can say no more.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before One o'clock.

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VOLUME CCCXLIII.

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- *c.* Order for 2R.; Bill withdrawn *April* 28, 1631

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OLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (*see* DARLING, Mr. M. T. STORMONTH)

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- *c.* Considered in Committee *Mar* 27, 124; *Mar* 31, 377; *April* 1, 448
- Considered in Committee and Reported; Read 3° and passed *April* 22, 1101
- *l.* Read 1ª * *April* 22, 1069
- Read 2ª and Committed to Committee of the whole House *April* 25, 1407
- Considered in Committee and Reported *April* 28, 1504
- Read 3ª * and passed *April* 29, 1633

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- *Mar* 27, 53; *April* 1, 397, 401; *April* 16, 663; *April* 18, 916; *April* 22, 1083, 1159, 1161; *April* 23, 1195, 1221; *April* 24, 1254, 1255; *April* 25, 1427, 1431, 1434; *April* 28, 1508, 1630, 1631

PETITIONS

- Discussion can arise immediately on a Petition being presented to the House on condition that it is of personal, and not general, grievance *May* 1, 1809

PRIVILEGE

- *Sir W. Marriott and Mr. Parnell*—A question other than one having reference to Motions or Bills can be put by one Member to another if the Member to whom the question is put holds an official position
- It is usual in raising a Motion of Privilege to read the incriminated passages to the House, and then for the House to decide
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- Res. "That Proceedings thereon shall not be interrupted." The words left out of the Motion, "But after such proceedings are disposed of no opposed business shall be taken," are not necessary. The words of the Standing Order would come into operation, and the business of the Sitting would be dealt with according to the Rules applicable to measures taken after 12 o'clock *April* 15, 561
- The Order Paper being clear of Amendments, it is within the power of the Government to put down Supply and go on with it; but it is not within the power of any Member on that day to put down a notice of Amendment *April* 25, 1421

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- Trade and Commerce—"Filled" Cheese, 1536

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